History of Oriya Literature



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Jatindra Mohan Mohanty, who retired as Professor of English, Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, writes frequently in English and Oriya, and is acknowledged as a foremost literary critic in Oriya literature. His book of literary criticism in Oriya, entitled *Suryasnat* received (Central) Sahitya Akademi Award in 2003. His other books in English related to Oriya literature are, *There Where Trees Flower* (1987), *Into Another Intensity* (1989), *Madhusudan Rao* (1996), *Along The Stream* (1999), *Land Beautiful : On Orissan Culture* (Ed. 2001) and *Tradition and Creativity* (2003). He is currently engaged in preparing a complete anthology of 600 years of Oriya literature of which 5 volumes (out of a projected 8 volumes, about 7000 pages) are already published. He lives in Bhubaneswar with his family.

Dedicated

To the memory of my father
Jagamohan Mohanty
the freedom-fighter
who believed in social equality
and taught me how to love literature.

and

To the memory of my teacher
Prof. Bidhu Bhusan Das
rare teacher rare scholar
who wanted me to write such a book.

In Gratitude

Dr. Bishnu Prasad Mohapatra, friend, who stood solidly behind me through my days of strain and despair, and always reminded me of the goal to be reached.

The Orissa Foundation, Dr. Devi P. Misra and Mrs. S. Mishra, whose friendly benevolence put courage and strength in me.

Sm. Bijayalaxmi, who kept a close watch on me and who was always a fountain of nourishment to me.

INTRODUCTION

Oriya, one of the major scheduled languages of Indian Republic, is an ancient language, about 1000 years old, and is spoken by about 30 million people. The geographical area where the language is spoken is known as Orissa - the Province of Orissa, in the east coast of India, from 17°49' N. to 20°34' N. latitude and 81°21' E. to 87°29' E. longitude, having a total area of 1,55,707 Sq.Kms. (4.74% of Indian land mass) with a coast line of 480 Kms and 30 districts. It is full of mountains, forests and rivers, as well as innumerable temples dedicated to different gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon, including Lord Jagannath's temple at Puri, Lord Shiva's (Lingaraj) temple in Bhubaneswar, and the most famous of all, a world heritage, the temple dedicated to Lord Surya (Sun-God) at Konark. It was variously named as Kalinga, Trikalinga, Utkal, Tosali, Kosala, Odra and Orissa in ancient times.

The earliest recorded history of Orissa goes back to a time before Christian era, first, to Asoka's famous invasion of Kalinga (261 B.C.) that changed his course of life and the course of his administration, and secondly, to Kharavela, an extremely powerful first ruler of Orissa (1st century B.C.), who conquered vast stretches of territory in the north and the south and established himself as one of the most powerful rulers of the time, a great conqueror and empire-builder in the early phase of Indian history comparable to, it is said, Mahapadmananda, Chandragupta Maurya and Asoka before him, and Samudragupta after him. He was a Jaina by faith, and a protagonist and votary of Jainism. But he practised religious tolerance, was well-versed culturally, and in addition to warfare did a lot of social welfare activities for his people. His capital was said to be at Sisupalgarh (now a part of Bhubaneswar city), and towards south of Bhubaneswar, in the Khandagiri and Udayagiri

mountains (now also a part of Bhubaneswar city) he set up habitations for Jain monks by hewing a number of caves and inscribed inscriptions about his own reign. These inscriptions, famously known as 'Hatigumpha Inscription' speaks of him in glowing terms. Kharavela was particularly instrumental in introducing Aryan language and culture into Orissa and consolidating them. The Pali language and Brahmi script used in the Hatigumpha Inscription, underwent transformation afterwards, in subsequent centuries, to evolve into Oriya language and script.

Kharavela, by his excellence and vision, for the first time, about 2000 years ago, gave a distinct habitat to the Oriyas, and established what may be called by a hindsight, a distinct Oriya nationhood and Oriya pride. But that did not continue as such for the next 700 to 800 years, till at least the Bhaumakaras came in the first half of the 8th century and the Somavamsis in the middle of the 9th. It was largely a matter of scattered domains and scattered kingships when various dynasties ruled in piecemeal fashion in different portions of Orissa, in continuous warfare with each other. In between three things happened. First, the invasion of Samudragupta that happened in the middle of the 4th century. But the invasion did not extend to the whole of Orissa. Samudragupta marched through the western and south-western parts of Orissa and affected a number of small, independent states in that area, such as Kosala, Korala (Sonepur district) and Mahakantar (Kalahandi and Koraput districts). Though not so much politically, yet culturally, Orissa's contact with the Gupta empire, particularly in matters of ushering new ideas of living and ideas in art and architecture, was fruitful. Secondly, the invasion of Sasanka, the King of Gauda (Bengal) in the early decades of the 7th century, when he established his occupancy in the coastal Orissa (the region to the north of Mahanadi) and put a Governor named Somadatta, as the feudatory chief. Sasanka's rule was immediately followed and supplanted by the invasion of Harshavardhan, the ruler of

Kanauj, who defeated Sasanka, brought coastal Orissa, which he named as 'Odravisaya', under his suzerainty, and appointed Somadatta as his vassal chief. Harsavardhan's suzerainty did not last long. It ended with his death in the middle of the 7th century. But the contact, like the Gupta contact earlier, brought in newer and fresher conditions of culture and living factors as a whole. The third notable thing was not an event but the visit of a single individual, that did not bring in rejuvenating contact, but provided a portrait of Orissa at that time. It was the visit of the famous Buddhist scholar from China, Hiuen-Tsang, during the reign of Harshavardhan. Hiuen-Tsang visited all the zones of Orissa, then under different independent kings, such as Odra, Kangoda, Kalinga and Kosala, and gave interesting accounts of people, places, religious faiths practised, and particularly, as he was a Buddhist, the relative prevalence of Buddhism in different zones. Thus in Odra, where Mahayan Buddhism prevailed he noted one hundred Buddhist monasteries and ten thousand Buddhist monks. Similarly in Kosala too where also there was a prevalence of Mahayan Buddhism, he noted a large number of monasteries and monks. The other two zones, that is, Kangoda and Kalinga, as he pointed out, was not so much given to Buddhism, but largely to Brahmanical religion and to Jainism.

Two powerful dynasties emerged during this period, and ruled different parts of Orissa. The first was the Mathar dynasty that came to rule southern Orissa soon after the southern campaign of Samudragupta, beginning from the middle of the 4th century, for about 150 years, till the end of the 5th. It was an independent dynasty that did not owe any allegiance to the powerful Gupta emperors in the north. At the height of its power the Mathar kingdom extended from the Mahanadi in the north to the river Krishna in the south, and its two most powerful rulers were Umavarman (360-395 A.D) and Saktivarman (400-420). The Mathars ably assisted by civil and military officials provided sound

administration to the country. They patronized Sanskrit literature, promoted maritime trade with the south-east Asian countries, and gave support to the evolution of Orissan sculpture. They also exhibited religious broad-mindedness, and along with the dominant trends of Jainism and Buddhism, they saw to the development of Brahamanical cults such as the Bhagavat and the Saiva. In fact, the significant contribution of the Mathers to the cultural matrix of Orissa at that time, was in the closer interaction they could achieve between the Brahamanical or Sanskritic culture from the north and the tribal culture of the land - a synthesis of tribal, north Indian and south Indian cultures as a whole.

The second dynasty was that of the Sailodbhavas, who also ruled over the southern portion of Orissa, from the middle of the 6th century A.D. to the middle of the 8th century. It is said, the dynasty originated among the tribal people residing in the mountains, as the word 'Sailodbhava', a Sanskrit word, meant originating out of the mountains. Hieun-Tsang too, who visited Orissa in 638-639 A.D. described the Sailodbhava country (Kangoda) as a 'mountainous country'. But the Sailodbhavas did not have as convenient a go as the Mathars had to a large extent earlier. It is said that the Silodbhavas had to balance between two powerful kings - Harsavardhan in the north and Chalukya king Pulakesin II in the south, and had to adjust to the situation from time to time. The dynasty had two important kings. One was Sainyabhita II (615-665 A.D) who could defy the powerful neighbours and set up a strong, independent administration. The second was Dharmaraja II (695 A.D. - 726 A.D) who was reputed as a benevolent and 'mighteous' king and patronized Brahamanical religion and held Vedic sacrifices. The Sailodbhava period was a period of creativity in Orissan art and architecture, and it achieved a fusion between the Chalukyan art of the south and the indigenous art of Kalinga. The rulers were great patrons of Saivism, and number of Saiva temples in Bhubaneswar (Parsurameswar,

Satrughaneswar, Bharateswar, Swarnajaleswar and Lakshaneswar etc.) are assigned to the Sailodbhava period. Prof. K.C. Panigrahi, the noted historian, points out that the Sailodbhavas built the Tribhubaneswar Siva temple at Bhubaneswar, which was subsequently rebuilt by the Somavamsis as the famous Lingaraj temple.

The historians point out that the real significance of the Sailodbhavas lay in the fact that from them onwards we get a regular dynastic history of Orissa. It is largely correct. For about 600 years after Kharavela, Orissa did not have a definite identity. It was parcelled out in many names, each name claiming suzerainty, and was ruled by various ambitious groups, communities, even individuals. At best it can be considered as a seed-time for the nation to grow and group and organize itself. The Sailodbhavas provided some attempts, and good attempts too, towards this organization. This was done for the first time, with force and conviction, by the Bhaumakaras, who came to power between the first half of the eighth century and the middle of the 10th, and they ruled over a territory which may be historically called Orissa proper- from the Midnapore district of West Bengal through the undivided Balasore, Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam districts, the whole of Orissa's coastal belt, as well as such interior states as Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Hindol, Talcher, Pallahara, Bauda and Keonjhar etc. There was some controversy about who they were and wherefrom they came, but it is now generally assumed that they emerged from Orissan people, and Orissa was their original homeland. Their two earliest kings were Lakshmikaradeva and Kshemankaradeva, who were Buddhists (the latter took the Buddhist epithet *Paramopasaka),* initiated a new era *(Samvat),* which according to K.C. Panigrahi corresponds to 736 A.D. of the Gregorian calendar. Their two most powerful kings were Siva karadeva I (736 A.D. - 780 A.D.) and his son Subhakaradeva I (780 A.D. - 800 A.D.). They both were staunch Buddhists, the

former took the Buddhist title *Parama Tathagata* and the latter *Parama Saugata* (the latter sent a Buddhist manuscript called *Gandavyuha* to the Chinese emperor Te-Tsong in 795 A.D). Even most of their successors too, believed in Buddhism. But on the whole the Bhauma kings practised religious toleration. Land grants were given to Brahmins, and many of their queens took initiative to build temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. A distinctive feature of the Bhauma kings was that many of them were women. As the records show, at least 7 of them (mothers, widowed queens, daughters and sisters) ascended the throne, and ruled intermittently, beginning from 845 A.D. for about 100 years, that is, till the end of the Bhaumakar dynasty. The first such person was Tribhubana Mahadevi I, who was quite a powerful and able ruler, had an army of three lakh soldiers, and herself a great devotee of Vishnu. ("With the head sanctified by the lotus-like feet of Hari, she enjoyed the unparalled fortune and thought that there was no other work for her to do"- Talcher Copper Plate). A later lady-ruler, Dandi Mahadevi, towards 923 A.D., also a powerful ruler, assumed the titles of *Parama Maheswari* and *Parama Bhattarika* etc.

The administrative system of the Bhaumas had a good deal of similarity with that of the Guptas in the north. They had a well-organized bureaucratic machinery and a hierarchy of officials. They believed in the king's divine powers, functioned as benevolent despots, and regarded themselves as the foremost protectors of their people. They had a grand army consisting of infantry, elephantry and cavalry. The early Bhauma rulers were Buddhists, took Buddhist titles, strongly supported the development of Mahayana and Vajrajana or Tantric Buddhism, and not only pre-Bhauma Buddhist monasteries or *Viharas* continued to flourish, but many newer ones were added to that. In short, Orissa under the Bhaumas became a great Buddhist centre, and places such as Puspagiri, Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri, Udayagiri etc. acquired international reputation. Yet Bhauma kings in general, and later kings

particularly, were more inclined towards non-Buddhist sects as Saivism, Vaishnavism, Tantricism and Shakti cult, and the kings as well as their queens built number of temples dedicated to their faiths. That was quite a distinction of Bhauma times - building of temples, that combined architectural and sculptural excellence along with religious synthesis and eclecticism. The examples of such temples in Bhubaneswar are Sisireswar, Markandeswara and Taleswara, all Siva temple, and Vaital and Mohini temples (Sakti temples). In addition they promoted Sanskrit language, learning, and institutions of learning, such as the famous monastery of Ratnagiri that attracted scholars from far and wide. They also promoted oversea trade and commercial relations with Sri Lanka, China and South-East Asia. In short, the Bhaumakaras were alert and capable, much interested in people's welfare, and put equal emphasis on agriculture and industry, of which the keenly pursued one was manufacture of cloth. All that constituted the first attempts towards the end of the first millennium, to establish Orissa and the Oriya nation as a whole with viability and credibility in the comity of ambitious powers all over India at that time - the second fruitful existence after Kharavela's times.

The dynastic rule of the Bhaumakaras was followed by the dynastic rule of the Somavamsis, who initially ruled in western Orissa (Kosala). But due to the expansionist attacks of the Kalachuris from the western side, they slowly moved over to the east, and in time, by mid-10th century A.D. (the last known date of the Bhauma era was 949 A.D.), they occupied the coastal belt (Tosali, Utkal, Odradesa etc.), and at the height of their power they ruled over a kingdom which roughly corresponds to the present day Orissa, that is, the whole of undivided Sambalpur, Bolangir, Balasore, Cuttack and Puri districts, and parts of Ganjam, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj, and in addition, Midnapore districts. Mahabhavagupta Janmejaya II (882-922 A.D) was considered as the virtual founder of Somavamsi Kingdom in Orissa. But the more

relavant rulers were, Mahasivagupta Yayati I (922-955 A.D), Mahasivagupta Yayati II (1025-1040 A.D) and Mahabhavagupta Udyota Keshari I (1040-1065 A.D). The Somavamsi rule ended in the second decade of the 12th century (1118 A.D), when the Imperial Gangas came over to Orissa, and assumed its sovereignty.

The Somavamsis ruled for more than a century and half, and in many matters they continued the good trends of the Bhaumakaras. Thus, first of all, like the Bhaumakaras, they were responsive to the people's needs and ran an administration adjusted to people's welfare. They constructed bridges and dug wells and tanks, practised religious toleration, divided the kingdom into territories convenient to people, beginning from *grama* (village) to *mandala* (province), maintained an efficient bureaucracy, both civil and military, maintained a large, standing army, and themselves performed as supreme heads of military forces and led them in battle, They also, like the Bhaumakaras, accepted the *Varnashrama dharma,* performed the Vedic sacrifices and facilitated the migration of Brahmins from the north through generous offer of land grants, in short, effected the Brahminisation of the socio-religious life of Orissa, and assimilation of the north Indian Sanskritic culture into the Orissan culture, Then, they were great builders and contributed remarkably to the field of art and architecture. The Orissan architecture that had begun with the Sailodbhavas reached great heights, almost to the level of perfection, towards the close of the Somavamsi period. It is said that what happened afterwards in Orissan architecture was more concerned with elaboration than with any introduction of new features or forms indicating new directions of development. The magnificent examples, by themselves masterpieces of Orissan architecture, were such temples as Lingaraj, Brahmeswar, Mukteswar and Rajarani, all in Bhubaneswar, and the images in those temples are among the finest specimens of sculpture. The temple-constructions indicate another aspect of the Somavamsis -

their religious toleration at par with earlier dynasties. Though Saivites themselves and provided liberal land grants to the Saiva temples, priests and ascetics, and gave patronage to well-known Saiva scholars from far and near, they maintained religious toleration and adequately promoted other sects such as Jainism, Vaishnavism, Saktism etc. In a different way the Somavamsis also patronized the development of Sanskrit learning and literature, and a number of scholars, highly proficient in Vedas, Vedanga, Smruti, Puranas as well as in Grammar, Poetry, History and Logic etc., such as Sadharana, Purusottam Bhatta, Bhavadev, Acharya Subhachandradeva and Narayana Satkarni etc. flourished during the period. So too, the early formation of Oriya language could he noted in many of the Somavamsi inscriptions. The Somavamsis were often attacked by ambitious kings from the north, west and south. Yet they could hold on their own, gave unitary administration to Orissa as a whole, continued many of the good traditions they inherited from the Bhaumakaras and provided the first bold evidences of a nation rising to be aware of its own identity and heritage. The Imperial Gangas who replaced the Somavamsis at the turn of the millennium, from early 12th century onwards, established this identity in bolder and more conclusive terms. From early 12th century till the middle of the 16th, for about 450 years Orissa was consolidated into a great viability and grew as a bold, powerful nation - one of the very best in the whole stretch of Eastern part of India - respected, feared and acknowledged as one of superior merit and position. This could be possible because of the competence, vision and administration of the Imperial Gangas in an unbroken line of succession till almost the middle of the 15th century, and thereafter, for another about 100 years, till about the middle of the 16th century with equal competence shown by the Suryavamsi Gajapati Kings. The period as a whole was a golden time of hope, ambition and achievement, when not only creative imagination but also physical factors of life grew to unprecedent

levels of fruition and richness. The Gangas came from the south, initially as invaders. But politically and culturally they identified themselves with Orissa, and not only constructed the massive Jagannath temple at Puri, but declared Lord Jagannath as the real ruler of Orissa, on whose behalf, they, the Ganga kings, ruled the state. That was a greatly sagacious move which immediately established an intimate rapport of the Ganga kings with people through Sri Jagannath. Secondly, their decision to concentrate in countering the Muslim attacks from the north was a far-sighted decision which helped them to maintain the integrity of Orissa empire at a time when most parts of India were falling a prey to the Muslim power. In fact, Orissa owes to the Gangas the development of her territorial and cultural identity. They united northern, southern and western parts of Orissa, in fact, united whole of Orissa as is known today, grew a strong Oriya identity, brought in pride and confidence through military prowess, practised complete religious toleration including great devotion to Purusottam-Jagannath and allegiance to Vaishnavism in consonant with the popular trends, promoted art and architecture further and took that to unprecedented heights (Lord Jagannath temple at Puri and Sun-temple at Konark are good evidences), actively encouraged overseas-trade that brought in economic prosperity, and promoted indigenous factors including music and dance as well as Oriya language and literature along with the developmental support given to Sanskrit and Sanskrit learning. The dynasty provided 15 rulers in a period of three centuries and a half, and of them three outstanding rulers were Chodaganga Dev (1077 - 1147), Anangabhima Dev III (1211-1238) and Narasimha Dev I (1238-1264). They laid the solid foundation of the rule of the Imperial Gangas in Orissa, and can be reckoned as three all time great Kings of Orissa, and can be compared to Emperor Kharavela at the beginning of the first millennium.

Kapilendra Dev (1435-1468 A.D.), the first Gajapati King,

was also a great military leader. He was a son of the soil, and rose from humble surroundings to become a minister of the Ganga ruler, to finally become the ruler himself. He was a man of great ability, and restored the political strength and stability of the kingdom which was fast getting eroded under the weak Ganga rulers. He reorganized the empire as essentially a military state, set up a vast army of infantry, cavalry and elephantry, had a string of forts both in the north and the south to provide protection to the empire, and almost continuously got engaged in protracted expansionist warfare, particularly in the south. Kapilendra Dev was an outstanding leader militarily. But not so his son Purusottam Dev (1468-1497) and grand son Prataprudra Dev (1497-1538). Yet the empire could hold on, and came to grief only after the death of Prataprudra, when in another 30 years time in 1568, it lost its independence, identity, and authority, and came under the northern invaders, and continued to remain so till modern times.

Orissa's loss of independence in 1568, and thereafter the continuous occupation by outside powers - the Muslims, the Moghuls, the Marathas, the British, was finally redeemed in 1947, when Orissa got back is independence along with Independence for India as a whole. It was a long period of about 380 years, and the total debilitation it caused to the nation was enough to take away whatever the nation as a whole had gained during the earlier Somavamsi, Ganga and Suryavamsi rulers. The historians ascribe many reasons to the decline and fall of the medieval Hindu kingdom of Orissa. Beginning with natural calamities, they go over to economic weaknesses, treachery and rebellion of feudatory chiefs and nobles, continuous external invasions, and the decline and weakness of royal power resulting in political instability and decline in military strength etc. Whatever that may be, it was a period long enough for the nation to lose its moorings, and the backbone of a once proud nation was almost broken to mincemeat. Yet the nation could hold on. In spite of political chaos and the

resultant debacle, the few factors that sustained the nation as a whole may be noted. First of all, Orissa had an almost cent per cent agricultural set up that remained as the strongest frame of living, and provided a compact binding force to people in spite of continuous political debacles. Secondly, because of continuous political uncertainty, particularly because of aggressive inroads of rulers of different religious faiths, the social frame that used to be largely open, free and generally followed the traditional prescriptions (*like Varnasrama* etc.) became cautious, circumspect, and for its own preservation became strictly indrawn and to a large extent conservative, all of which functioned like a shield to outside factors. Thirdly, strong religious faith and beliefs of people, including the pervasive influence of Vaisnhavism even in matters of daily living, and particularly the great faith in Sri Jagannath, that acted as the focal centre for most people, and provided the strongest mental strength to people as a whole. Lastly, it was the binding force provided by the growth of Oriya language, by itself a unitary force for the nation, as well as the unabated growth of Oriya literature as powerful and relevant expression of mind's sensitiveness, throughout the period of deprivation and distress, and in many channels, beginning from epics to Kavyas and to songs and lyrics as well as to literature of prayer, meditation and of ontological discourses, constituted a great nourishment to people who otherwise felt lost and helpless - probably the greatest nourishment that can sustain a nation anytime anywhere. Oriya language and literature grew along with the growth of Oriya nation, and their mutual dependence as time passed and even now, contribute to their mutual strength in no small measure.

Briefly, that has been the context in which Oriya language and literature developed. It is said that around 12th century when the regional administrations in India slowly got detached from a central control and grew as independent units by themselves, the regional languages developed. It was so with Oriya language. From

Pali language and Brahmi script used in Kharavela's Hatigumpha Inscription, the language progressed through centuries, through Pali, Prakrit and Apabhransa, till we reach *Baudha Gana O Doha,* around 12th. century that gave almost first indications of a clear Oriya language. It was quite a likelihood as many of the Siddhacharyas who composed the *dohas* were from Orissa. Inscriptions too, around that time, gave early indications of an Oriya language. Anangabhima Dev III's two inscriptions at Puri temple (1226 A.D. and 1237 A.D) are good examples. Though the language in the inscriptions was much influenced by Sanskrit, yet it could provide a figuring of distinct Oriya words. It became a different situation about 150 years after, towards the end of the 14th century, in the many inscriptions given out by Narasimha Dev IV (1378 A.D to 1414 A.D) including the Oriya-Tamil *bilingual Bhubaneswar inscription. Sanskrit influence was* minimized and in spite of Prakrit interference, Oriya language was distinctly formed. In fact, around 14th century Oriya language had already taken a shape, and in the 15th, in the reign of Kapilendra Dev, it further developed, freed itself from interference of Prakrit, and not only in many inscriptions and copper plates of Kapilendra Dev, but most importantly in the writings of Sarala Das and his contemporaries, the language came to be established as a fully formed one, full of richness and strength.

In fact Sarala Das's emergence in the mid-15th century was phenomenal. The track-record of Oriya literature before him was not such that could have thrown up a writer as substantial as he was. It would be difficult to explain his emergence by socio-political, socio-cultural or socio-religious grounds, though all that might have contributed to his making. His is the fit case where an individual talent not only changes a tradition, but sets up a new one for subsequent generations to follow. Sarala Das's appearance was no doubt amazing, but equally amazing was the quick succession of equally competent writers who followed him at short

intervals. We can name a few. Thus Balaram Das, Jagannath Das and Achyutananda Das wrote great epics in Oriya, and along with Jasobant Das and Sishu Ananta they greatly extended the range of imagination and meditation, and guided and shaped people's faith and devotion. Then there were Dinakrushna Das, Upendra Bhanja and Avimanyu Samantsimhar, who wrote Kavyas and excellently provided expansion to people's imagination; and such other poets as Salbeg, Gopalkrushna, Banamali and Kavisurya Baladev Rath whose unique poems of love and devotion still reverberate in Orissa's countryside; and finally Bhima Bhoi who stood as a rock communicating faith, insight and vision.

That was ancient and medieval Oriya literature that ended in mid-19th century. The dimensions of modern Oriya literature were no less exciting. Beginning with Radhanath, Phakirmohan, it progressed through Nilakantha and Gopabandhu, to Gopinath Mohanty, Surendra Mohanty, Sachi Routray and Manoranjan Das. The aspects were many, so too creative directions. The past emphasis on the spirit of religion and desires of love were supplemented by a spirit of nationalism and strong social awareness, and finally came to an analysis of human predicament in a hostile, uncomprehending world. Oriya literature grew in the context. But it also grew independent of the context, and realized itself as the finest expression of human sensibility and perception that lived and suffered, yet lived towards grace and benignity. Oriya literature, from the 15th till 21st century, is intensely involved in its environment. That is one aspect. The other aspect is the power to keep away from the environment and look at it detachedly. On the one hand there is a search for joy and happiness in life, hence emphasis on love, as in ancient Oriya poetry, on the other a search for bliss, as in Bhakti poetry, or to come to a meaningful understanding of existence, an in the novels of Phakirmohan and Gopinath Mohanty. To wade through 600 years of Oriya literature is exhilarating, enervating and highly satisfying.

Jatindra Mohan Mohanty

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All translations incorporated in the text from original Oriya poetry, prose, drama etc. have been done by the present writer.

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL PERIOD

1

BACKGROUND

What is popularly termed as ancient and medieval period of Oriya literature, extends from about 14th century till almost to the middle of the 19th and can be more profitably viewed as one period, as the whole period has interlinking trends and dimensions and in spite of complications and changing trends within itself, the writers have similar or almost similar mental horizons and attitudes and motivation. All that underwent significant change only towards the end of the 19th century, with the advent of the British administration and Western education, when new generations of writers emerged with different world-view and different ways of reacting to situations in life. The period begins with the great epic poet Sarala Das and his epic *Mahabharat* and ends with the great Bhakti poet Bhima Bhoi, and in between, we have three more epics, a good corpus of Bhakti poetry, a much larger corpus of Kavyas or narrative poetry, and innumerable songs, lyrics and geetabalis and padabalis. In fact, in spite of heavy political trials and tribulations for about 400 years, the Orissan countryside continued to reverberate with songs and poetry, and the type of link and oneness that was established between the writers and readers or the listening public, has never been possible after that. The ancient Oriya literature (and medieval literature too) was mostly in poetry - songs, *chautisa*, *chaupadi*, *koili*, *bhajana*, *janana* etc., as well as short and long narrative poems or Kavyas, with very occasional sallies into prose and that too heavily influenced by poetry, and the motivation ranged from religious to

semi-religious, to secular. Somehow, it is interesting to note, the creative activities of the writers grew largely independent of political changes, and flourished in a way more akin to the continuing agricultural set-up and a pulsating religious atmosphere. Socially, many of the local kings supported the writers, and emotionally, people at large, provided the necessary strength and encouragement to them. The ancient Oriya literature had good range, good depth, excellent perspective and insight, and emotionally quite satisfying even to the modern readers.

By the 14th century, Orissa has undergone a very significant political change. In fact, the change took place around 12th century, when the Imperial Gangas from the south came to occupy Orissa's throne, united all scattered territories into one strong viable unit, which subsequently came to be known as 'Odra' or 'Orissa', a powerful empire from the river Ganga in the north to the river Godavari in the south, in the east coast of India, and succeeded in providing a strong identity to Oriya nation as a whole. The Gangas were competent rulers. With the Muslims pushing from the north and the onslaught of Hindu kingdoms from the south, that was quite a trying time for Orissa. Yet the Gangas could hold to their own, resisted the attacks from the north and the south, and gave good administration to the people. At least three Ganga kings, Chodaganga Dev, the founder and the first king, and the two subsequent kings, Anangabhima Dev and Narasimha Dev were extremely powerful rulers, great visionaries, quite liberal in their outlook about things, and great builders. All of them built a good number of strong forts all over Orissa, and militarily raised an invincible army for necessary defence and attack. A copper plate inscription inscribed towards the end of the 13th century (Kenduapatna Copper Plate) refers to the devastation caused by Narasimha Dev's invasion of Bengal in interesting poetic terms - "The (white) river Ganga blackened for a great distance by the collyrium washed away by tears from eyes of the weeping Yavan

(Muslim) women of Radha and Varendra and rendered waveless as if by this astonishing achievement, was now transformed by that monarch (i.e. Narasimha Dev) into the (black water) Yamuna" (translated).

But the Ganga kings were also strongly culturally motivated. For example, Chodaganga Dev (Anantavarman Chodaganga Dev,1077-1147) built the Vishnu temples at Mukhalingam, Srikurman and Simachalam, and the great temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri, of which he became a great patron and propagator. He was a man of immense learning, and was well-versed in the Vedas, Puranas, Kavyas, religious lores and Silpasastras, and extended good deal of support to Sanskrit and Sanskrit-learning. Besides, he was intensely religious and simultaneously patronized the Brahmanical, Saivite and Vaishnavite religions, and assumed three religious titles - 'Parama Brahmanya', 'Parama Maheswara' and 'Parama Vaishnava' respectively. Anangabhima Dev too, coming to rule after about 64 years (Anangabhima Dev III, 1211-1238) was as intensely culturally motivated as his predecessor. He built a new capital, called Abhinava Baranasi Kataka, adjoining the present Cuttack city, in the place of Chaudwar-Katak, the earlier capital of Chodaganga, and raised a temple for Lord Purushottam and two Shiva temples in his new capital, and made significant structural additions to the Lord Jagannath temple at Puri. In fact Anangabhima's most important association was with Jagannath culture, and his declaration of complete devotion to Lord Jagannath, in a way a step ahead of what Chodaganga did - declaring oneself as the 'Servant of the Lord' (*Rauta*), on behalf of whom only, and as His Deputy, the king runs his administration. This shift of overlordship from the king concerned to Lord Jagannath Himself, a unique aspect in the royal dispensation at the time, not only endeared the king to the priests, the Brahmins and the people at large, but also added a completely new dimension to the national perception, and to the emergence of Oriya national

spirit, physically, mentally and spiritually, centred round Lord Jagannath, which got its magnificent fruition about 200 years after in the 15th century, in the reign of Kapilendra Dev.

Narasimha Dev too (1238-1264) continued the tradition set up by his predecessors, both culturally and in temple-building. He continued the tolerance to all religions as before and also continued his great devotion to Lord Jagannath, and at the same time built temples here and there. But his greatest achievement, which came as the culmination of his deciding victory over the Muslims in the north, and as the crowning-glory of Orissa's temple construction, was his construction of the famous temple dedicated to Sun-God (Lord Surya) at Konark, at a distance of about 32 kms. north-east of Puri, on the sea-coast, justifiably one of the greatest heritages of the world. It is said that it took about 1200 artists and sculptors to complete the construction of 69.5 metre high temple in about 16 years, and about 12 years' revenue of Orissa at that time was spent in the process. The temple's wonderful architectural beauty has drawn ecstatic comments from all around. A.K. Coomaraswamy's comments in this connection may be noted- "The temple is not only unique as a sun-temple, but it is in itself both architectural and in the details of its sculpture, one of the noblest monuments of Indian mediaeval art." ('Four Days in Orissa', *Modern Review*, April, 1911, as quoted in *Temples of Orissa* by K.S. Behera, 1993). Differently, a romantic euology of the temple by a modern Oriya poet, Mayadhar Mansingh (1905-1973) is highly graphic and interesting which sees the temple rising from the blue-sea, like Goddess Laxmi, in resplendent beauty and youthfulness, to the utter amazement of all concerned. This is how he writes :

Oh incomparable beauty
When you rose into the sky
Suddenly, from blue river streams and golden beach,
Like Laxmi, Vishnu's wife,
From the heart of the Ocean,

Suddenly, millions of eyes would have opened
And millions of palms would have joined in your hymns.

The Imperial Gangas ruled till almost the middle of the 15th century. But the last hundred years were largely a time of decline, a process of sliding down the scale, due to the succession of weak rulers and lessening military strength. But the frame of administrative set-up established by the great Ganga rulers continued, so also economic prosperity, social harmony, liberality in matters of religion, and continuing patronization in cultural matters such as in art and architecture as well as in music and dance etc. They were also patrons of learning. They offered land-grants to learned Brahmins, temples and *maths* (monastery) and supported the latter particularly, to grow up as centres of religious culture. So also Sanskrit language and literature, as well as Sanskrit scholars and writers were given due weightage and recognition. Some such writers, to name a few well-known ones, were Jayadev, the author of *Gita Govinda,* Viswanath Kaviraj, the author of *Sahitya Darpan,* Pandit Vidyadhar, the author of *Ekavali,* Sridhar Acharya and Nilambar Acharya, the *Smruti* writers, and Satyananda, the astronomer, who wrote *Surya Sidhanta.* Oriya language too, had its beginning expression in stone and copper plates gifted by the kings. On the whole, the rule of the Imperial Gangas succeeded in inculcating a free, fearless national spirit - a spirit that had its own pride and strength, and an awareness that could be called an awareness towards realizing something like a regeneration of one's own identity. The views of K.C. Panigrahi, the noted historian, in this connection, is pertinent. - "The Gangas united Orissa politically and culturally", he said, ".... The shrine of Jagannath at Puri which assumed an all India character during their rule became a great centre of cultural fusion among the Oriya people. The Gangas built the great temples like those of Jagannath at Puri, and of the Sun-God at Konark and myriads of other smaller temples in various cultural centres of Orissa, and these shrines

became the centres of cultural unification." (*History of Orissa,* 1981, P.188).

The political change took place towards the mid-15th century, in 1435 A.D., when the weakness and ineffectiveness of the later Gangas was ended by the emergence of a powerful military leader. He was Kapilendra Dev (1435-1468) who overthrew the Gangas and founded a new dynasty, called 'Surya Vansa' (Solar Dynasty), and because his army had a large elephant-contingent he came to be popularly known as 'Gajapati' (The Lord of Elephants). Kapilendra Dev was a very competent person, and his reign was almost a throwback to the glorious times of great Ganga kings. He aggressively pursued a policy of conquest, extended the limits of Orissan empire in the south, and established Orissa as the most powerful Hindu kingdom of the time. Otherwise he too achieved remarkable success. The trends of cultural regeneration and national awareness that the Gangas had promoted, he carried to newer heights. Thus Lord Jagannath of Puri became a famous centre of worship and devotion that attracted great saints and savants from all over India, and itself became a symbol of Oriya pride, glory and oneness. Then that, which had only a seed-time during the Gangas, blossomed into wonderful foliage during Kapilendra's reign, and expanded into strong, powerful branches afterwards, that is, Oriya language and literature. No longer Sanskrit was given the pride of place, though it continued to remain as a very important language. But the native, ingenuous language grew up - the language in which people spoke, gods were adored, country lores and songs were circulated and kings issued their inscriptions and copper-plates. From mid-15th till mid-16th and a little later, in about 100 years time, thanks to Sarala Das and his junior contemporaries, Balaram Das, Jagannath Das and Achyutananda Das, (who wrote the *Mahabharat,* the *Ramayana,* the *Bhagabat* and the *Harivansa* respectively), the great Sanskrit books were put into Oriya crucible, and came out as great Oriya

books, that laid a very solid foundation for Oriya literature to stand up and grow, and what a growth it was ! - a rich, magnificent one that grew unabatedly for 400 years. Thus the glorious reign of Kapilendra Dev was concomitant with the glorious growth of Oriya literature and equally glorious expansion and synthesizing factor of Jagannath culture, both of which kept the Oriya nation bound together in spirit and oneness, and sustained it in hard times it had to pass through subsequently.

Politically the time that follwed was a real hard time or was going to be. In fact, the troubles had started much earlier, from the time of the later Gangas. It was both - external aggression and internal dissension. Besides, to maintain a vast empire, from Ganga to Godavari and beyond, in perfect order, in those days of difficult communication, particularly across innumerable coastal rivers, was always a hard task. Kapilendra with his remarkable capacity could maintain it adequately, and also added a lot of lustre to it. But it was not so after Kapilendra. His successors, his son and grandson, Purusottam Dev (1468-1497) and Prataprudra Dev (1497-1538), were otherwise competent rulers, men of great learning, and fully devoted to the cause and prestige of Orissa. But they lacked the power and authority of Kapilendra. Apart from the Muslims relentlessly pushing from the north, they also had to contend with powerful and ambitious kings from the south, with whom they had to be engaged almost throughout their reigns. Particularly, Krushnadeva Roy, the powerful king of Vijayanagar, was a menace to Prataprudra in the beginning of the 16th century. He inflicted crushing defeats on Prataprudra again and again, advanced up to his capital Katak, burnt and looted it, took his queen as prisoner, and compelled Prataprudra to give his daughter in marriage to him as a sign of his submission. Prataprudra died in 1538. But by that time Orissa's political suzerainty was much curtailed, the respect for royal authority was much lessened, and the general administration was not in good order.

From 1538 till 1568, when Orissa lost its independence, it was a harrowing tale of intrigues and murders, of ambitious, unscrupulous people trying to usurp the throne and killing each other, and an equally harrowing time for the people of Orissa as a whole, when they did not know whom to obey, and who was the real authority. The last king of independent Orissa was one Mukunda Dev, who ruled from 1560 to 1568, and fought the last battle against the Muslim invaders. He was struck by internal enemies and by his own people and was killed in a battle in 1568. Subsequently Orissa came to be ruled by the Afghan rulers of Bengal that continued almost till the end of the 16th century, which was later replaced by the Moghuls who ruled directly for about a century (1592-1707) and then through the Nawabs of Bengal (till 1751), and then the administration passed on to the Marathas and finally to the British (1803). Thus, the last 1000 years of Orissa's history had two distinct features. First, it has been the account of a nation that found out its moorings and rose to heights of great prestige and glory, beginning from the 12th century till the beginning of the 16th, thanks to the able, imaginative and welfare-motivated administration of the Gangas and Suryavansis, through the remarkable leadership of great kings, Chodaganga Dev, Anangabhima Dev III, Narasimha Dev I and Kapilendra Dev. Secondly, reversely, it has been the account of man's basest instincts, of great despair, deceit and smallness, when in about 50 years time, in the 16th century, all glory was lost, and politically a proud nation's backbone was broken, and henceforward, for long centuries, Orissa remained as an appendage to Bengal, from which it recovered only in the 20th. In these years of calamity, beginning from the 16th century onwards, three things sustained Orissa's essential strength and the essential life and spirit of its people. They were, first of all, Orissa's compact agricultural frame - self-contained communities living in innumerable villages, pursuing their own ways of life in perfect understanding and adjustment

among themselves, not much affected by the political changes that took place at the centre or headquarters. Secondly, a deep, tolerant religious faith that covered all castes, all communities, all people and all faiths, at the apex of which a strong, dedicated devotion to Lord Jagannath of Puri, who came to be recognized as the national deity of Orissa, and in whose honour temples dedicated to him came up in almost every village of Orissa, and to whom people always turned for succour in their days of calamity, and companionship in their days of happiness. Thirdly, it was the beginning and growth of Oriya language and literature, the great desire of the people to be intelligible to each other in their own mother tongue, and the great eagerness of writers to express their innermost thoughts and experiences for the benefit of all and in a language which all of them could say as their own. Beginning from the 15th century, and despite calamitous political changes, Oriya literature grew into great richness, and by the 19th century it has come up to a wonderful growth firmly planted in the soil. It seasoned Oriya life in many ways. It taught, excited, guided, and advanced people's imagination and bound them together in oneness. The great edifice of Oriya literature, from Sarala Das to Bhima Bhoi, took in its ambit many aspects of culture and ways of living - spiritual, religious, intellectual as well as aspects of sheer joys and happiness, and considerations of individual's trials and tribulations. In short, Oriya literature, devotion to Lord Jagannath, and the pattern of living of a self-contained agricultural community sustained Oriya people through odds and adversity, that could emerge once again as a strong nation in the beginning of the 20th century.



2

PRE-SARALA

(*i*)

Some of the earliest indications of Oriya language are traced to *Baudha Gana O Doha* (Baudha Songs and Dohas), popularly known as *Ascharya Charyachaya.* The book was discovered by Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Sastri from Nepal Court Library in 1907, and it was published by Bangiya Sahitya Parishad in 1916. The book contained 50 songs which were supposed to describe both acceptable and unacceptable behaviour related to religion. These songs or Dohas were written by Natha Siddhas between 8th and 12th centuries, and in Apabhransa language with a liberal mix of ancient eastern Indian languages from such places as Mithila, Assam, Bihar, Orissa and Bengal.

The writers, Siddhas, pursued 'Bamachar' practice, a religious practice prescribed by Buddhist Tantrism, which was generally performed by a man in collaboration with a woman, for which they generally used to choose women (*yogini*) from low caste. In fact the Siddhas did not believe in caste, and welcomed people from all castes into their midst, and there was quite a good sprinkling of references to 'low-caste' people among them.Yet they were much respected in the society, and even many kings and princesses accepted them as their Gurus. The Siddhas declared themselves as mystics, and spoke and wrote in a language that bordered between what is understood and what else is not understood. Their writings show how best one can live, that is, how best one can enjoy and go through the process of life initially, only to rise in the scale towards what they called acquiring 'great happiness'. They believed in body, in putting the body to Yogic disciplines, in austerities related to instinctive realisation of *Sunnya*

(emptiness), and in the thoughts related to bodilessness. What the Siddhas practised and propagated had a pervasive influence on people in general.

Though Siddha literature lists 84 Siddhas, yet those who got reputed as the writers of Dohas were not many. Some of them, to list more important ones, were Sarahapa, Sabarpa, Bhusukupa, Luipa, Birupa, Dombipa, Darikapa, Gundaripa, Kukkuripa, Kanhupa, Shantipa, Kamaripa, Gorakhypa and Tilopa, of whom largest number of songs were written by Kanhupa (13), Bhusuku (8) and Sarahapa (4), Some of them such as, Bhusukupa, Kanhupa, Luipa and Sabaripa etc., are said to belong to Orissa, and traces of old Oriya language could be located in their songs. They were poets and men of wisdom, and believed that one can achieve greatest happiness and fulfilment of life through Yogic discipline, meditative practices, and by subduing powerful sense organs, and finally in the union with *Nairatma Devi* who inhabits in the circle of greatest happiness (*mahasukha*). Their philosophical faith grew from a knowledge of the self and was expressed in the symbolism of language.

A good example is Luipa's famous song *Ka Tarubara*, written in the *raga* 'Pattamanjari'. The poem in its original language is as follows :

Ka tarubara pancha bi dala
Chanchala chie paithe kala,
Didha karia mahasuha parimana
Lui bhanai Guru puchhia jana,
Saula samahia kahi kariai
Sukha dukhete nichita mariayi,
Ehi eu chhandak bandha karan kapatara asa
Sunupatha bhiti lehure pasa,
Bhanai Lui amahe jhana ditha
Dhaman Chaman beni pindi baitha.

It means - "The body is like a tree that has five branches (five

sense organs). The time (time's decay) enters into a restless mind. Therefore make the mind strong and experience great happiness (*mahasuha*). Lui says take the advice of Guru to know this. Why go to trances when one is sure to die in weal and woe. Therefore give up external rites and body's decorations, and take the road to the ways of emptiness (*Sunnya*). Lui says, I see in meditation both *dhaman* and *chaman* are sitting on the body (*pinda*)." Suggestive Oriya words in the song are, *Ka, dala, chanchala, chie, paitha, didha, karia, bhanai, puchhi, jana, kahi, kariai, nichita, eti, bandha, sunu, amaha, beni, baitha* etc., which continue even now unchanged or marginally changed. Content-wise the trend of ideas in the poems is also significant, as such ideas have been taken up later by Oriya writers who were not Siddhachayas. Another good example would be from Kanhupa's well-known song *Nagara Baharire Dombi*. Its *raga* is 'Dasakha', and it reads (in original) :

Nagara baharire Dombi tohori kudia
Chhoin chhoin jai so Brahma nadia,
Alo Dombi toe sama kariba ma sang
Nighina Kanhu kapali joi langa,
Eka se padma chhausathi pakhudi
Tahin chadhi nacha Dombi bapudi,
Ha lo Dombi to puchhami sadabhabe
Aisasi jasi Dombi kahari nabem,
Tanti bikana Dombi abar mo changida
Tohar antare chhadi nadapeda,
Tu lo Dombi haun kapali
Tohar antare moe ghenili haderi mali,
Sarabara bhanjia Dombi khao molana
Marami Dombi lemi parana.

It means - "Dombi, you have your cottage outside the town. You go on touching the bald Brahmin. Oh Dombi, I will be your companion. I am Kanhu, Kapalika Yogi and naked. That is a single lotus with sixty-four petals and Dombi-woman climbs it and dances on it. On, Dombi, I ask you with good intention, whose boat you

use for coming and going. Now Dombi weaves the loom. She is no more idle. I forshake all my property for you. You are Dombi, I am Kapalika. For you I have taken the bead of bones. You ransack the pond and eat *malan*. I kill you and take your life." The suggestive Oriya words are many, such as, *nagara, bahare, tohara, kudia, chhoin chhoin, Brahman, alo, kariba, mo, sanga, eka, chhausathi, pakuda, tahin chadi nacha, bapudi* etc.. In fact the poem has many more suggestive words and phrases than that we found in the earlier poem. Besides, the poem speaks of a mystical perception more eloquently than before, and more familiarly.

(*ii*)

The Charya dohas were not strictly literary pieces. They were mostly mystical expositions written metrically, more akin to religious and Yogic practices motivated towards the propagation of the religious sects to which the Siddacharyas belonged. Neither were they strictly written in Oriya language though some of them exhibited early use of Oriya language, particularly in individual Oriya words, case-endings, verbs, prefixes and suffixes and also in metres used. But a distinctly Oriya composition came a little later, around 14th century, when the Siddhacharyas and the Siddha-cult came to be replaced by the Natha-cult and the distinguishing ascetics of the same, such as Gorakha Nath, Matschendra Nath and Jalandhara Nath etc. The latter came to be as popular as the former in the countryside and were equally accepted and revered by the people. The Nathas were as much inclined towards religious and Yogic disciplines as the Siddhas were. But they had greater social motivation and larger involvement in the social frame, and greatly interested in the improvement of human character and quality of human living. Whereas Siddha-literature remained at a distance and is considered distantly, more or less as a routine formality from the point of view of the development of Oriya literature, Natha-literature was not so. It had greater bearings on Oriya literature, particularly at the beginning stage, and had good

deal of influence on the important Oriya writers in the 15th and 16th centuries.

The first important Oriya work, which can be called a piece of literature, motivated by Natha-cult, was *Sisu Veda* and its time was supposed to be 14th century. The use of the word 'Veda' is a misnomer as it had nothing of the Vedas in it, itself being an anthology of 24 dohas, each doha consisting of 4 lines, and the metres varying from doha to doha. Yet it projected itself, and people accepted it too, as such, not as the 'Veda' (in the line of 4 great Vedas) spoken by Lord Brahma, but spoken by Lord Shiva, who was claimed to be its author, since no individual's name was assigned to it. In fact, it can be taken as a collection of *banis* or sayings by Gorakha Nath. It described the Yogic practices of Natha Gurus, and a commentary was given to each of the dohas.

Sisu Veda gives a good account of Natha cult. But it does not provide much of conceptual ideas. On the other hand it puts emphasis on application and on necessary austerities one has to practise, and the outcome or the result of all that, is only indicated. The first step for a Yogi who wishes to attain fulfilment, is to discipline his body. Unless that is done the vision does not attain its fixity. And unless the vision becomes pinpointed the mind cannot get its stability. That is the first requirement. Once that is done, that is, the mind becomes still, the Yogi goes over to a state of infinite bliss. That is what *Sisu Veda* tries to map out. If a Yogi wants to sup with the immaculate (*Niranjana*) or inexistence (*Sunnya*) the ways he has to follow, the austerities he has to practise, and the meditations he has to go through. There are three powerful elements in the body. They are wind (*pabana*), mind (*mana*), and most important, semen (*sukra* or *bindu*). Once the *bindu* gets fixed and stable, the Yogi gets released from all his desires. The body is subject to age and death. To discipline the body one has to contain the semen. Because from semen the body develops, and if that gets restless old age and death are inevitable. Therefore to contain the semen, and to keep it still and fixed should be the first and

most important aim of a Yogi. In no case the semen should move 'downward', it should always move 'upward', and slowly through a process of austerities and purification it would help the sleeping powers *(kundalini)* to rise at the primordial point, and finally the *kundalini* penetrates through six circles (*sada chakra*) to be united with the immaculate at the point of thousand circles. The mind and the wind are naturally restless. In *Sisu Veda* mind is compared to a woman and the wind to a crazy person. If they join together the person moves towards death. Therefore the *kundalini* powers have to be awakened to get a person released from death.

As can be seen, *Sisu Veda* is a book of prescriptions, and reasons out the need, and enjoins that the directions are to be strictly followed. But more important than that is the fact that it is a mystic poem, with mystic attitudes and motivation. From the beginning it speaks about that 'final point' where all forces meet ("The time, the lotus and *Niranjan* inhabit at one place") and points out how adjustments are to be made between the vision and the mind so that one can advance to 'that point' - "The mind and the vision have a single point/ The mind and the vision are joined together/ The vision sits over mind/ And the divine radiance emanates." Elsewhere the experience of the 'final point' is more explicit :

When all move that doesn't move,
Though it rains day and night
That doesn't get soaked,
Though sword strikes, it doesn't get cut.....
It is silence in the midst of noise
It emerges by itself from the noise
The noise moves to the side of silence
They both inhabit at one place ...
No shape no form no knots no shade
Only one body covers whole universe,
Lighter than cotton heavier than three worlds
Thinnest in the measurement of time and space,
Softer than butter no needle can go through

Nothing washed though it rains day and night.

Sisu Veda was the first clear document of Oriya literature. It is both - an exciting piece of literature and an exposition of deep philosophy. Its insight influenced Oriya literature prospectively. Not only there had been innumerable references to it, to the extent of copying it verbatim by the subsequent writers in the subsequent centuries, but its process of thought fertilized the poetic understanding many ways.

Sisu Veda's companion volume, an equally important exposition of Natha cult, was *Amara Kosa.* It was written a little later, towards the beginning of the 15th century, ahead of Sarala Das, and its writer was, like *Sisu Veda's,* unknown. Its composition, in comparison to *Sisu Veda's,* appears to be simpler, though it remains as firm a document of early Oriya literature as *Sisu Veda* was, and its influence on subsequent Oriya writers was as pervasive as that of the earlier one. *Amara Kosa* literary means 'Immortal Bag', and refers to five bags or containers within which like a sword in the sheath, the body is kept. These *kosa* or bags are *Anna Kosa* (Bag of Food), *Pranamaya Kasa* (Bag of Sense Organs), *Manomaya Kosa* (Bag of Mind or Self), *Bijnamaya Kosa* (Bag of Intelligence or Learning) and *Anandamaya Kosa* (Bag of Happiness or Material Satisfaction). All these have limited areas of operation. They themselves are complete, but only at an inanimate level, and in no way advance the progress of the soul. How that has to be done, the ways in which the soul's progress could be advanced towards immortality, have been highlighted in the details put forth in *Amara Kosa.* Hence the title.

The subject-matter of *Amara Kosa* is quite extensive. Initially it identifies various limits of the body from the point of view of Yogic considerations. Secondly, it gives quite a good account of *mantras*, medicines and gifts etc., necessary for disciplining the body or for bodily austerities. In order to streamline and stabilize the shaky and tottering body and to provide it with an aura of fulfilment and consummation, various link-points and

joints of the body have been described. They extend from top to toe. The container or 'amara kosa' is that place in the circle of the heart where the divine soul shines along with the life-organs of the body. Once it is understood that the whole universe is manifested in the confines of the body, in between the top and the toe, the other things become easy. This is, what the Natha-cult calls, the *Pinda Brahmanda* concept (The Body as the Universe). Thus if the votary or the devotee understands it all right, that the body is the replica of the universe, then he can engage himself with the circles inside it. Then only the dry body bursts into foliage, and thereafter, it has been the aim of *Amara Kosa* to pin-point the great realization or the ultimate happiness to which the devotee comes to. Thus it describes the Guru and the disciple relationship on the one hand, and the Yoga-linked wisdom and 'Pinda Brahmanda Bada' on the other, and along with that maintains how women pose a great obstruction to Yogic meditation etc. The basic decision is to release the soul, as well as to release the body of the devotee. In *Amara Kosa* both purposes have been linked to focus an integrated understanding of Natha cult.

The poem begins with a reference to the Gurus - "I bow to thee Sabarinath, the prime person/ I bow to thee Kanthadinath, deeply grave/ I bow to thee Jalandhar, greatly wise/ I bow to thee Govind Chandra, the supreme King", and then goes over to a detailed account of the limbs of the body that are given different names and infuse different connotations, mystical and philosophical, and then declares how in the circle of the heart the fire of the life-organs mingles with the fire of the supreme soul :

Oh my son, see the immortal bag
See how the supreme soul
Shines with the life-organ (*prana-linga*)
On the circle of the heart (*hrudaya chakra*),
Oh my son Loi
Know the way to nine nerves (*naba nadi*),
Heart is a round pavilion (*golahata*)

Where a still shining light burns.
Meditate there on the supreme soul, Oh son,
Beyond, the load of eighty four crores,
Come, know the ways to eighty four crores,
The way to Niranjana
Supreme Being without illusion,
Its door is closed with a thunderclap (*bajra kabat*).

Finally, the poem ends in a dialogue-conversation between Loi and Adinath, the disciple and the Guru, where the Guru answers questions put forth by the disciple related to physical, mental and spiritual disciplines one has to go through to come to a purification of the soul, and to attain the mystical links with the Supreme Being. *Amara Kosa* was an important document of the Natha-cult. Written about 600 years ago it had more of contemporary religious and philosophical details than strictly literary. Yet it was an important literary document too, that initiated significant ideas and literary flourishes for the future generation.

Natha cult and its progenitor Gorakha Nath provided significant dimensions to Oriya literature at its beginning stage. Natha dharma was quite popular in the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries all over India. It was quite popular in Orissa too. It is said that out of its 12 main branches, one branch, that is, Satyanathi branch's headquarters was in Orissa, at the famous Saivite shrine at Bhubaneswar. In fact, ancient Oriya Bhakti literature was very much influenced by the philosophy of Natha dharma. Particularly in the writings of the poet-saints of the 16th century Orissa we have many references to Yogic practices, and to *Hatha Yoga*, *Saptanga Yoga* and *Astanga Yoga* etc., as well as to a number of concepts related to Yoga, such as *Pinda Brahmanda Bada* and *Kayakalpa* (Body Prolongation). In the pre-Sarala literature, in a period of about 300 years, from the 13th till the 15th century, two main trends could be noticed. One owed its origin to Buddhist Siddhacharyas and the *Charyacharya* dohas. The second came from Natha Siddacharyas and their writings, the particular works

being *Sisu Veda, Amara Kosa* and *Gorekh Samhita* etc. In a way the whole period can be termed as the 'Siddha Sahitya' or Siddha literature period, and Natha literature particularly not only brought in new ways of understanding and newer perception, but more importantly, filled in the huge gap between the Charya literature and Sarala literature and acted as a strong link between the two.

(*iii*)

Kalasa Chautisa by Bachha Das and *Kesaba Koili* by Markanda Das, were two fine poetic pieces written immediately before Sarala Das, supposed to be in the beginning of the 15th century. Both the poems belong to a particular metrical category which is called *Chautisa.* It is basically a poem of moderate length, on various themes, composed with rhyme, in the serial of 34 Oriya consonants, from *Ka* to *Kshya*, a stanza being given to each of the consonants, where the concerned consonant is used as the first letter of each of the lines of the stanza. That is the usual process of composition, though there are variant examples, as in the case of Bhima Bhoi in the 19th century, where a reverse process has been used, that is, the poems begin with *Kshya* and end with *Ka*, in which case the poems are called 'Olata Chautisa' (Reverse Chautisa). The form Chautisa has been an extremely popular form with Oriya poets all throughout, and by a rough estimate there are more than a thousand Chautisas written at different times, in addition to a large number of them not published so far, and circulating in the countryside orally, Both *Kalasa Chautisa* and *Kesaba Koili* (which is also in Chautisa form) have been located by scholars as the two earliest Chautisas that have inspired many subsequent writers to adopt this form of composition, as well as to write extensive thematic commentaries on that.

Kalasa Chautisa is in 22 stanzas, 4 lines in each stanza, the arrangement being in the order of Oriya consonants with some occasional omissions. The subject matter is based on a happy

episode from mythology, the marriage of Shiva with Parvati. But the atmosphere is not one of joy and pleasure, where people celebrate on the occasion of marriage. Instead, in the reaction of Parvati's lady-friends we become aware of something that has vitally gone wrong in the choice of the most important person on the occasion, that is, the bridegroom. He is old, rather too old, a complete mismatch for a youthful, beautiful lady like Parvati. He is not only old, he is abominably dirty, cannot support himself, cannot speak, cannot hear, cannot see, a complete travesty of a bridegroom. It is not imaginable how the King could choose such a person for his incomparable daughter. Some of the references are very graphic :

He coughs painfully breathes asthmatically
His breath is sharp and head droops low ...
His hands and legs are swollen like *Sana* flower
Eyes watery, no sense, mind crazy
Can't recognize any body
Can't see, can't hear
Eyes, nose, face all sunken
The belly like a newly dug hole...
He totters, can't sit upright
He has no teeth, cheeks like a spindle
His ear-lobes dry, like skin,
A poor, unholy, contemptible creature.

The ladies show the bridegroom to Parvati. She sees and swoons. Her mother, the queen, also sees the bridegroom and she is flabbergasted. She scolds the King, and wants to know how this could happen. This is the first segment. The King assures them that everything is all right, and requests them to go through the rituals of marriage. The marriage is gone through. Parvati is adorned with ornaments, and the marriage rituals are faithfully followed ("They finished the Puja of *labana chaunri* / Women sang holy songs gracefully / Brahma sat as preceptor on the altar / And ten people lifted the bridegroom"). Even then there was a

snag. The 'old' bridegroom coughed continuously and fainted, and all women cried. But the end was pleasant. The 'disguise' was taken off and Shiva appeared as he was - a bright, powerful personality, and the bride and the bridegroom shone resplendently like two divine beings. Finally, the poem ends by the poet putting his submissive prayers to Lord Shiva - " He stays in Kapilas, the Lord of all worlds / Bachha Das, of small intelligence, prays Him and reads Kalasa."

The poem shows three important aspects. First, reverence for Lord Shiva, whose marriage to Parvati is described, a reflection of the trends of contemporary Natha dharma, in which Lord Shiva was the most important presiding deity. Secondly, an account of an important social occasion - the marriage, and marriage rituals and celebrations, the general frame of which continue in Oriya society even today, and hence the details have a very familiar ring with the present-day readers. Thirdly, the sly exposition of an evil social system, that is, young women given in marriage to aged people irrespective of their wishes, a system which was not only prevalent then but even now. But the poem's structure has some complications. It has a mixed tone of pleasure and joy, along with pain and agony, of excitement with despair. Then there is a mix of humour with satire. Apparently there is a veneer of mild humour, like taking a good-natured dig at somebody you love and even respect - the devotee taking liberty with his object of devotion in the faith that the latter will not object to it. But deep inside, when the humour extends to social parameters, the humour becomes biting, it turns to satire. Thirdly, two levels continue simultaneously and provide necessary tension and strength to the poem. One refers to the knowledge of people, who know that the whole thing is made-up, a disguise, and Shiva is Shiva, not anybody else, and hence their calmness. The other refers to ignorance of people who take it as a fact, and hence their restlessness, agony. *Kalasa Chautisa* is a fine poem, both in its richness of imagination and literary merits. It was the first fine literary piece written before

Sarala, a typical product of its time, both in content and language. At the same time its creative range has endeared it to generations of readers, even till today.

Markanda Das's *Kesaba Koili* is of different tenor. A poem shorter in length in comparison to *Kalasa Chautisa*, it is an account of Jasoda's sorrows in the absence of Krushna after he left for Mathura. The poem is in the pattern of reminiscence where Jasoda recalls many details of Krushna's life as he lived in the house of Jasoda. Its tone is simple and melancholic and it refers to many points of happiness for Jasoda. But the simple, sorrowful tone, a melancholic outpouring of a mother's heart, has endeared the poem, like the earlier one, to innumerable readers subsequently. It would be interesting to note how a number of well-known poets afterwards dilated upon the poem though they wrote in different contexts ranging from personal emotions to intellectual expositions. Such poems were *Artha Koili* (Meaningful Koili) by Jagannath Das, *Kanta Koili* (My Husband, Koili) by Balaram Das, *Baramasi Koili* (Twelve Month Koili) by Sankar Das, all of 16th century, and *Jnanodaya Koili* (Rising-Wisdom Koili) by Nathia Lokanath, of the 17th century.

The poem begins with an address to Cuckoo ('*Koili*') which continues as a refrain at the beginning and at the end of every couplet. But that is only a formality, the Cuckoo is not expected to carry a message, nor it is asked to do such a thing. It is only a witness, or one may say, a point of starting, as Jasoda goes on reminiscing various details about her son Krushna. Thus it begins :

> Oh Koili, Kesaba has gone to Mathura,
> At whose command my son has gone
> not to return, Lo Koili,
> Oh Koili, whom should I give milk to drink,
> The son who eats has gone to Mathura, Lo Koili.

Thus it continues, one detail after another :

> Oh Koili, once I beat him with a stick,
> Has my Krushna left because of that, Lo Koili.

Oh Koili, Akrura came as a messenger,
Cheated saying it was an outing
and put them in a chariot, Lo Koili.
Oh Koili, tears came trickling down,
Krushna stayed in Mathura after his quarrels, Lo Koili.

Slowly the reminiscences moved from external details to emotional pain and restlessness, to a subtle spiritual realization where Krushna is seen not just as a young boy, but in a different light, a person of immense power, an arbiter of events, and whose contact has a range of holiness and leads to spiritual emancipation :

Oh Koili, my Gopapura has lost its grace,
Since Narayana has left for Mathura, Lo Koili.
Oh Koili, my Madhoi was holy and sacred,
I was sanctified daily looking at his face, Lo Koili...
Oh Koili, Indra rained for seven days,
The seven-year son could lift the Mandara, Lo Koili.
Oh Koili, he yawned and opened his mouth,
And I saw all the seven worlds inside it, Lo Koili.

Kesaba Koili, because of its emotional sweep, maternal intensity and simple, musical language has remained a much-loved poem and along with *Kalasa Chautisa* on the one hand, and *Sisu Veda* and *Amara Kosa* (and even including Markand Das's own *Mahavasya*, supposed to be a spiritual treatise), on the other, severally and together, from familial emotions, to social considerations, and to religious beliefs and intellectual concepts, in short, creative achievements combining literary, religious and philosophical aspects and attitudes, the way was led to the great, glorious achievement of Sarala Das - the achievement that emerged from soft morning light to dazzling meridian power.



3

SARALA DAS

(*i*)

Sarala Das lived towards the middle and later part of the 15th century, at a place about 50 kms. from the present Cuttack city, towards the east, in Jhankad Pragana, near the famous Mother-Goddess temple of Goddess Sarala, from whom, it is said, he took his name and at whose bidding, he composed his famous work the *Mahabharat :*

She is the great Goddess
Named Sarola Chandi
And I am her son
Sarola Das the poet
She ordered me happily, the Sakambari
Compose the Mahabharat and obtain Kapilas.

Sarala Das was an agriculturist - a 'Sudra', for which he is often called 'Sudra Muni' (Sudra Rishi). But he transcended his caste, and by the Goddess's blessing or not, rose high on merit, and single -handedly, 500 years ago, laid the solid foundation for Oriya literature to grow and evolve. Sarala Das lived in a glorious time in Orissa's history during the reign of great Gajapati King Kapilendra Dev, when Orissan empire had extended from Ganga to Kaveri. The King's glory was the nation's glory and Sarala Das partook the glory, and his writings reflected that in a large measure.

Sarala Das himself made a reference to the books that he wrote - "The Goddess was pleased to dictate the primal books/ First the Ramayana, second the Bharat/ and the third was Sri Bhagabat...". That is, he undertook to write on the models of the great epics and great books of the past, such as the Ramayana, the Mahabharat, and Sri Bhagabat. The books were *Bichitra*

Ramayana, Mahabharat and *Chandi Purana* which was otherwise known as 'Devi Bhagabat'. These constituted Sarala's major, and known work, and probably written in that order. Of these the *Mahabharat* remains as his most important, most matured work, and has not only remained as the greatest creative document of its times, but has continued to exert seminal and vital influence on generations of writers, even till today.

(ii)

Bichitra Ramayana took its structure from the latter part of Valmiki's Ramayana, and begins with the banishment of Sita in the Valmiki's hermitage, and ends with Sita's entry into earth in Rama's Court and the final account of Rama's end of mortal life. In between, the whole story of Ramayana has been incorporated, mostly in the songs sung by Laba. The book is about 400 pages and 11000 lines in mostly rhymed couplets. The first authentic edition of the book was published in 1980, edited by Sachidananda Mishra, based on palm-leaf sources as well on several Telugu translations of the same. Its total narration may be divided into a few distinct parts, such as, (1) Sita's banishment in the forest, her stay in the Valmiki's hermitage, her subsequent journey to her father Janaka's place, and the birth of her two sons Laba and Kusa on the way in the forest; (2) Sita's stay at her father's place, her second fire-ordeal at the bidding of Janaka to vindicate her chastity, and the growing-up period of her two sons; (3) The movement of Laba and Kusa from place to place singing the story of Ramayana, ending at Rama's Court where they sang the whole of Ramayana from the beginning till Sita's banishment in the forest; (4) Rama's identification of his two sons, the union between the father and sons, Rama's return to Sita in a penitent mood, and Sita's final entry into the bowels of the earth. The fifth and the last section is a sequal to the whole story where Rama passed on his royal responsibility to his sons, visited holy places along with his

brothers, and finally left this mortal abode for the immortal abode from where he had come. The first two sections throb with emotion, passion and intense mental reactions in adverse situations where Sita is seen as a suffering, troubled woman - a victim of man's indifference and callousness. The rest of the sections are in a general narrative structure narrating the story's development as a whole, with objective attitudes and occasional points of sharp, emotional frame of mind.

A few examples of Sarala's creative power may be cited in this connection. The first relates to when Sita was left in the forest alone without knowing that she had been left out. She was asleep when Lakshman left. When she got up she was highly confused, found herself at a loss, and the whole account of her reaction was as much painful as graphic :

She was asleep due to fatigue
She rubbed her eyes and looked around
Lakshman was not there where he sat
She was amazed not knowing what to think,
Has he gone to pond for water, she thought ...
When the great lady couldn't find Lakshman
She was startled, confused,
If Lakshman is alive, she thought,
Could he go somewhere else leaving me,
The forest is dense, deep,
Nobody anywhere,
Did the animals eat him up, she wondered.

The initial fear and loneliness, mostly a mental condition at that particular situation, slowly goes over to a different state of mind, a queenly patronising strength that could rationalize the situation (that she could not have been left in the forest like that) and could give a scope to her imagination to concretize beauty (and that too external beauty of the forest) in a completely adverse situation. But the consciousness of reality of being left alone in a hostile,

uninhabited forest and the attendant fear, despair and helplessness comes back :

The lady looks around and starts crying
Why do I stick to this unholy life, she wonders.
She gets up and sits down again under the tree,
Tears roll down from both of her eyes
And sweat from her body...
'What should I do now
Where should I go without knowing roads.'
The Sun's rays faded, shades deepened,
And darkness spread all over evening.

The translated pieces do not convey the beauty and strength of the original - its creative dimensions and both flexibility and discipline of organisation. One wonders at its complete contemporaneity. But that was Sarala's forte - a penetrating understanding, a relaxed manoeuverability, and an intense contemporaneity.

Another example would be when Sita gave birth to her sons in the forest on the way to her father's place. She was accompanied by Valmiki, and they had to walk all the way through the forest. It was all right for Valmiki. But for Sita, heavy with pregnancy, and not much accustomed to take such strain, it was a big ordeal. Sarala writes :

Valmiki in front, and Janaka's daughter at the back
They followed tracks through deep forest
And impenetrable jungle and tall sal trees,
And the lady as she walked felt fatigued, tired...
Heavy with pregnancy she shivered, trembled
And always ran behind the Rishi....

Then suddenly she was seized with the pangs of childbirth,

'Oh, great Rishi, help me', she moaned,
'My stomach aches, I do not know what to do,
I look around, and see darkness everywhere'.......

Then she fainted. The Rishi took water and sprayed on her face.

She came back to senses. But could not get up, and cried,

'Oh, Oh, I do not know anything of child-birth
There is no other woman with me
Who will hold me, Oh Rishi'.
The Rishi answered -
'Oh, lady, hold the *siali* creeper
and deliver your child.'

In great grief she held the creeper tightly. The immense fatigue of the journey, the fear of the lonely, uninhabited forest, the acute grief that she has been most cruelly thrown away, the great fear of unknown, calamitous and extremely painful body-conditions overtaking her, and complete helplessness - all have combined to concretize the whole situation of great grief and pain, and the frame of a past mythological event ceases to exist, and what is enacted in front of us is the extreme loneliness of a greatly suffering woman when faced with child birth.

Chandi Purana, the account of Goddess Durga's victory over Mahisasura, was first authentically edited by Prof. Krushna Charan Sahoo, which he did basing on three extant palm-leaf manuscripts, and was first published in 1984. It is shorter than *Bichitra Ramayana,* in 185 pages, and in about 9000 lines. But in tone, approach and attitude, it is vastly different from the former. Whereas *Bichitra Ramayana* dealt with Sita's ordeal and Rama's story, and the approach was one of restraint and respect, and the tone in spite of emotional undertones, was of quiet understanding, *Chandi Purana* is an account of war, and the war-drums reverberate throughout the book, beginning with Mahisasura's invasions till his death. The accounts provide lots of excitement, show of prowess, power and valour. But there are also basic similarities. Both the books deal with woman's power. In one it is quiet, implied, and emerges through the mental strength of a woman who does not compromise and finally triumphs through immense adverse

situations. In the other, strength is equally noticeable. But it is not implied, it is vocal and expressed. What is implied is the mental strength, which goes to be manifested in an atmosphere of immense physical strength, and the ultimate establishment of woman's power becomes an almost symbolic act, the victory of light over darkness, and goodness over evil forces, in a way the basic trends in the story of the *Mahabharat.*

Chandi Purana's story has a simple unitary outline. Its 23 sections may be divided into two parts. The first part relates to the advent of Mahisasura through the boon of Brahma, his invasions and rise to supreme power on earth, his challenge to the power of the gods in heaven, and his final shattering defeat over them. In short, the whole account is about Mahisasura and his rise to supremacy. The second part relates to Sri Durga's powers - her emergence from fire, acquiring weapons of destruction from gods, throwing challenge to Mahisasura's powers, and the ultimate fierce battle in which she becomes victorious and Mahisasura is killed. Structurally both the parts appear balanced and impartially narrated, though the poet's distinct support (as well as reverence) for Sri Durga, and distinct disapproval for Mahisasura could be noted. In fact the simple outline of the story belies the immense narrative skill of the poet, and the dimensions of emotional change that underly the general frame.

The book begins with routine invocation to Lord Ganesh, and quickly moves over to an invocation of Sarala Chandi of Jhankad, the poet's own guardian-deity. In fact, a significant aspect of *Chandi Purana* lies in its many prayers. The poet never falters to praise the immense powers of gods and goddesses, particularly of Goddess Durga or Devi, who dominates the entire proceeding and controls every action - an outward projection of his own guardian-deity, at whose blessing he could write his books. The approach is one of great reverence, respect and humility. But that is only one level, though most important. The other level is, the

goddess who fought against Mahisasura, in spite of her divine origin and divine powers, was basically a woman, and there indirectly comes the link with Sita. She is an extraordinarily beautiful object that excites and makes people mad. This is how Chanda and Munda, Mahisasura's two commanders describe her to Mahisasura :

Her tresses - dark, curled, dense
Heavy like rain-bearing clouds,
Her forehead like a juicy fruit,
And eyes bright, clear...
Her two feet like two leaves, Oh Lord,
They glitter like pearls and blue stones.
The lips red like full-bloomed flowers
The teeth like diamonds, and shine like moon.
Oh Lord, Lord, her words are so cool
Like sweet music, like spring
When cuckoo sings......

The account has a number of directions, from purely physical towards a mental assessment of beauty and towards an atmosphere of both happiness and amazement. But the picture of a woman remains, a woman who is not only beautiful but also to be adored. This picture of a natural woman comes in a slightly different way towards the end, when in the fierce fight between Devi and Mahisasura, in order to defeat Mahisasura she is advised to make herself naked which she vehemently resents :

It cannot be - Durga said,
It is impossible in the three worlds,
It has never been seen, never heard
It can never be done to kill the evil demon...

Devi's hesitation was most natural for a woman, and we become aware how the great Goddess sheds off her divinity to become like a common woman. But that cannot be the end. She is the repository of immense power - the woman's power that the poet is

celebrating throughout. She only stoops low adjusting to particular situation, and the end becomes cataclismic :

As she heard innumerable helpless voices
She took the naked form of a fierce killer-woman,
She threw away clothes, became naked....
And her thighs became open
Her naked breasts for everyone to see
And a great fear moved everywhere.....

Chandi Purana is a celebration and threnody of woman's power - an early example of feminism that can hold its own against adverse situations, a symbolic presentation in mythological terms how best evil forces can be defeated to usher in wholesome benignity in life, an extremely desirable goal which man has often tried to achieve and has failed repeatedly.

A different and extremely relevant aspect of *Chandi Purana* has been pointed out by Prof. Sahoo. That relates to the book's contemporaneity with Sarala's own time. Written in the later 15th century when the whole of India was falling an easy prey to outside invaders, the book was almost like a parable of their cruelty, vandalism and fierceness in terms of vandalism and cruelty of Mahisasura and his horde. Thus the invasion of Mahisasura :

Kasi desa, Kausika desa, Kubuj desa and Kanauja
He conquered all famous countries all over,
Many ran away in great fear
Many offered all their wealth and begged protection.
Oh Parikshya, all deities of wood, stone and clay
They broke all, made a total destruction,
And all arches, pavilions, temples, structures
All that showed religion, were broken to pieces ...

Sarala Das made a strong plea for unity, of which Devi Durga who defeated Mahisasura, was a manifestation. He exhorted people to fight against corroding elements both from inside and outside, a fitting companion, in spirit, to great King Kapilendra Dev, who

not only fought the invaders effectively, but kept his own country united and prosperous. Sarala's creative ability achieved its full maturity in *Mahabharat,* the true foundation of the subsequent growth of Oriya literature.

(iii)

Prof. Artaballav Mohanty edited Sarala's *Mahabharat* in the sixties of the last century. The work was undertaken on behalf of the Culture Department of the Government of Orissa which later published it (1965). It was supposed to be an edition with authentic text, though it was not adequately so. Yet it was something to count where none existed before. Subsequently Prof. K.C. Sahoo, edited only two 'Parvas' (out of 18), that is, 'Adi Parva' and 'Swargarohana Parva' in 1978 and 1993 respectively. He avoided Prof. Mohanty's pitfalls, and though only a small portion of the total work (left unfinished by Prof. Sahoo's untimely demise) the two Parvas he edited provide an authentic text, and closest to the original that Sarala wrote. A complete authentic edition of Sarala's text is yet to be done.

The first thing to be noted is that Sarala did not copy the Sanskrit original, that is, he did not translate the same into Oriya. Except the frame it was largely an independent work, and being rooted in the 15th century Orissa, it singularly reflected the times and its many approaches and attitudes, and the Sanskrit original only provided the functional covering. Sanskrit Mahabharat has 18 Parvas and 100 'Upaparvas' (Subsections). Sarala did away with all the 'Upaparavas', and though he kept all 18 Parvas, he changed some of their names, the serial arrangement, and in many cases the content too. A good example is 'Shanti Parva' (Sanskrit 12, Sarala 14). In Sanskrit it is an extensive account, with about 365 chapters, having lot of discussions on what is wisdom. knowledge, education and philosophy and philosophical thoughts etc. But Sarala's 'Shanti Parva' is a very small one, with only three chapters,

that include the cremations of Bhisma and the Kauravas, the coronation of Yudhisthira, the illusory vision seen by Durvasa, and the importance of Konark as a holy place. A similar example is complete omission of 'Gita' in 18 chapters, an extremely important section of Sanskrit's 'Bhisma Parva'. Similarly such well-known stories as of Sakuntala, and of Savitri Satyaban etc., which are in the Sanskrit, have been ignored in Sarala. Interestingly also, whereas the Sanskrit Mahabharat has many references to Kalinga, Kalinga's king, the valour of Kalinga's soldiers, and their participation in the great war on the side of the Kauravas, as also accounts of Kalinga, Utkal, Odra (all related to Orissa) these have been omitted in Sarala, and the only reference to 'Kalingasen' does not carry any laudatory praise of the King.

Pandit Gopinath Nanda writing in the twenties of the last century first drew attention of the readers how Sarala Das in his *Mahabharat* maintained a strong identity independent of Sanskrit original. Talking of the variations and changes, he grouped them in 4 categories in general. They were, (1) those that he shortened, (2) those that he elaborated, (3) those that were originally in Sanskrit but were omitted by Sarala, and (4) completely new ones that he brought on in his book. Thus some were shortened and simplified such as philosophical ideas and concepts to make them understood by common people without much effort as well as some episodes and incidents like the travel of the Pandavas to holy places, and the abduction of cows and cattle of King Virat etc. Some were elaborated and even exaggerated to provide a sense of adventure and excitement to people, such as the killing of Jayadratha by Arjun, or killing of Shisupal by Krushna etc. Some were omitted which probably the poet did not think of much importance like Vyasa's consolatory advice to the Pandavas after Avimanyu's death, or Krushna's advice to sorrowing Pandavas, or even 'Gita' we have already referred to. Then new and original episodes were brought in, and they were quite numerous, based on legends, folk tales,

mythological tales and contemporary social life, like the marriage of Yudhisthira to Suhani's daughter at Jajpur in Orissa, Belalsen's death at the hands of Sri Krushna and the 'vision' granted to him to see through the battles at Kurukshetra, the Babanabhuta (Stray Ghost) story, the true-mango story, the abduction of Usha, the account of Sabari Narayana and the encounter between Kubera and Bhima at the time of famine at Hastinapur etc.

In this connection two examples may be cited in some detail. One relates to a central episode in the Sanskrit Mahabharat where the Yaksha asked Yudhisthira a number of questions, near a pool at Daityabana, where all the brothers of Yudhisthira had fallen dead because they had disobeyed the Yaksha. The second is Sarala's original one, that relates to Duryadhan's crossing the river of blood that flew from the battle-field, during his flight at the end of the war. In the Sanskrit original, Yaksha asked 123 questions all of which Yudhisthira answered. The questions can be arranged in 3 groups - (1) those that are related to the sun, sky, gods, truth, the Vedas and meditation etc. - the mental aspects; (2) that are about the Brahmins, the Kshyatriyas, and honesty, dishonesty and sacrificial rites - caste and character; and (3) related to habits, manners, ways of living, society, material things and human psychology etc. The basis of all these questions was what was called 'Arya Dharma', that is, the basic tenets according to which the Aryas should lead their lives. This was necessary at that time to establish the ideals of a righteous kingdom ('Dharma Rajya'). The purposes were substantially changed when Sarala's *Mahabharat* came to be written long after. By that time lots of movements and counter-movement had taken place not only in the areas of religion, but in total life-conditions and many questions that the Yaksha asked had lost their relevance or the answers had become different. That is why Sarala did not want to confuse his readers. Instead of asking 123 questions Sarala's Yaksha asked Yudhisthira only 20 questions, roughly to be divided into two

groups - related to the body and material things on the one hand, and on the other, beyond material concerns, related to spiritual world, how best man can be delivered from the tantacles of the worldly life, and about such concepts as 'Pinda Brahmanda' and 'Sada Chakra' rituals - esoteric religious ideas in which Sarala like other contemporary writers, ascetics and devotees believed. A few sample questions and answers would be -

Q. What is the area of the sky ?

A. The space of four fingers.

Q. How many steps in the world ?

A. Two steps.

Q. How many streams rain in six seasons ?

A. Nine streams.

Q. How many stars in the sky ?

A. *Two stars.*

Q. How many doors are in heaven, earth and nether world ?

A. Ten. Nine used for communication, one secret.

Q. What are the five elements ? Where do they stay ?

A. They stay in earth, water, lustre (the sun and the moon) and wind. They radiate in fifty colours, in fifty petals inside the six wheels (Sadachakra) of the body.

To the Yaksha's last question - "What is Kalapurusa (the Time) ? Who are its parents ? Where does it stay ?" Yudhisthira's answer was as follows - "It is not easy to define Kalapurusa. It is never destroyed, never spent, independent of any taste, and without shape. It can be traced in 'Sadapadma' (Six lotuses), 'Tribeni Sangam' (Confluence of three streams), nose, and in between the eyes. It is otherwise known as the person who works. If a wise or conscientious man can quietly concentrate on that which cannot be worshipped, then he may see it." Sarala explains it further, and points out that at the highest point on the head of Eternity (*ananta*), in a seat full of jewels, in the midst of fifty lotuses, it stays - "It never goes anywhere/ Never gets destroyed / Never rises or sets/

Never sleeps/ Never cohabits/ And has no day or night." Apart from what Yudhisthira answered, Sarala himself was eloquent about 'Kala' or Time, and identified it with people's belief of what he called 'Loka Dharma' (People's Dharma). When the two sets of questions are compared, one misses the expansiveness of Sanskrit in Oriya. But the times were different, and the questions and answers were adjusted to the respective times. Sarala put emphasis on learning, religion and spiritual revelations, and pointed out how man's good qualities are integral with his belief in God, and in this belief he was particularly devoted to the divine powers of Goddess Durga - important indicators for a healthy and wholesome society.

The second example that relates to Duryadhan's flight at the end of the war, has a different content and motivation. It does not deal with ideas, concepts, values and material and spiritual manners as we saw in the earlier one. It has strong human element and is charged with intense emotion - a creative enactment of human suffering and grief. The situation was unenviable, the end-devastation was cataclysmic, the battlefield was a huge heap of dead bodies. But King Duryodhan was unhurt, and he was trying frantically to escape from the battlefield. In the Sanskrit Mahabharat the account is brief and the narration is pointed. It is narrated in the words of Sanjay, how he himself had escaped from the battlefield, and how he saw Duryodhan alone, quite helpless, at some distance, and told him all that had happened and how all his people had been killed. Then Duryodhan in great grief sent a message to his father through Sanjay, and decided to enter into the Vyasa Lake ('Vyasa Sarobar') for his own protection - "However injured I am, I am now free from the battle/ And for my own protection I am now going to sleep inside the lake." And by his own magical powers he stilled the waters and stayed inside it.

But Sarala's account is different, a completely new one. Duryodhan in his flight was obstructed by a fiercely flowing 'river' of blood and did not know how to cross it. Then he found corpses

that came floating along the stream, and decided to cross the 'river' with their help. He found the corpses of Dussasana and his 97 brothers, and then the corpse of Karna, of Drona, of Sakuni, of Sallya and of many more. He recalled their association, and how they had supported him while they lived, and hoped that their corpses would ferry him across now. But nothing availed, none of the corpses of his one-time supporters helped him, they all sank under his weight and the weight of his maces. Then when the King was almost desperate, he found a body floating towards him looking bright and resplendent even in death. This is how Sarala writes :

It looked like the moon rising in the evening
And shining with ornaments galore.
As the King saw the strange body
He ran to the bank and pulled it.
He held the body tightly
And the body remained still on water.
Who is this great soul -
How amazing, how strange, he thought.
Will he take me across, he wondered.
The King took the corpse in his lap
And put his twin maces on the body,
The maces were seventy weight each
And yet the body took the weight and floated.
The King rode on it and sat astride
The body did not sink,
And floated on the river of blood like a boat of cork.
The King sat on it and rowed with both his hands
And crossed a long distance in an hour's time.
Towards the west of his land while it was day
He ferried across and got down from the body.
'Oh, Oh', he moaned, 'nobody could help me,
Neither Drona, Karna, Sallya, Sakuni, Dussasana or Bhurisraba,

Nobody was like you, Oh my friend,
Nobody could help me across the river of blood,
But you did, a great soul, even in death.
He turned the body and looked at its face,
He looked again, and yet again, and was amazed, startled.
'How come, how come', he shouted in pain,
'Oh my son, my Lakshman' - his voice broke,
he could not speak,
He cried, swooned, cried again,
'I asked you to run away
And Oh my fate ! Who killed you...'

This episode has two-fold connotation. First, it shows the traditional meaning that a son, 'even in death', supports his father, where no one else could. Secondly, the entire incident, as has been pointed out, is charged with intense human element, the sudden discovery by the father that while he was living his son was dead, and in a moment all that he fought for, his entire kingship and his entire battle became meaningless - in a way a devastating comment of the poet, who must have seen innumerable battles while he lived, on the futility of all such battles. Incidentally, the creative appeal of this situation could be seen on subsequent Oriya writers, and about 400 years later, Radhanath Roy, the famous modern poet, in the later part of the 19th century, took up this sorrowful incident to write a short fine poem entitled *Duryodhanara Raktanadi Santarana* (Duryodhana's Swimming of the River of Blood).

Sarala's distinction can also be seen in his character-portraits. Basically Mahabharat characters, they have acquired colour and substance from Orissa's environment, and in effect they have been held up as typically Oriya personalities. Thus Sri Krushna, in part, becomes a smart and clever Oriya; Bhima a guileless, simple man but rash and stupid; Ganga an aggressive, quarrelsome village-woman. A good example is Draupadi.

Draupadi is the heroin of the Mahabharat, and Sarala has not only kept her in that position - a position of great power and great virtue, on the whole an extraordinary personality, but has added substantially to that, and has much elevated her position. He has conceived her as the great Goddess Mahamaya, the female primordial power (comparable to Goddess Durga in *Chandi Purana),* manifested to fight against injustice, oppression and evil. This was at one level. At the other, she has been presented with a strong femininity - a strong vocal expression of a woman's pain, unhappiness and anger. That is, Sarala endows Draupadi not only with power and beauty, but also with strong human elements - a sense of fairness, impartiality, tolerance and a continuous concern not only for the members of her family but for all. Her answer to Satyabhama's query how she pleases five husbands, is pertinent and shows an 'inimitable womanhood' that is always sought for by men :

> I can't tolerate suffering and unhappiness,
> I don't disappoint the unfortunate,
> I don't know how to tell lies,
> I never bring any problem to anybody
> I am worshipful to my elders -
> My parents, husbands, teachers and guests.
> And beginning from my husbands to servants and maids
> I always cherish them in my heart.

Sarala's Draupadi is a remarkable woman - a great, imperious queen, obeyed and feared, and a family woman of great tranquillity, loved and respected.

Sarala's *Mahabharat* is a huge gallery of characters, both of men and women, and even of those who were neither men nor women, and from all ranks, positions and status - an extraordinary creative documentation of life, manners and people of the 15th century Orissa. Beginning from royal, and divine and semi-divine personages, to important people who move in the precincts of the

Court and the town, to other types of people in the lower rungs of the society, such as the tillers in the field, soldiers who fight battles, the wrestlers who wrestle for entertainment and also train youths in wrestling, the mendicants and Yogis who move around with gourd-cells begging, the bards who sing songs and tell tales, the dancers, both men and women, who move around entertaining villagers, the ascetics and Vaishnavas, the village apothecaries and astrologers, the village artisans such as potters, carpenters, masons and blacksmiths, the carterers, boatmen and businessmen, as well thieves, drunkards, and prostitutes etc. - an extremely comprehensive and kaleidoscopic picture.

Sarala wrote at a time when the nation's mood was up-beat, and this was reflected in his writing in a way that was not expected - the pride in one's own country, place and people, a spirit that came to be prominent in Oriya literature only towards the end of the 19th century, with this difference that in Sarala there was always a religious twist. It begins from the beginning with reference to his own place and he keeps up this habit throughout the book, joining the places with gods and goddesses, the mythology with history, geographical locations with popular tales, and the manners of one religion with another. But always the references are to Orissa, to places of importance, where people go and worship, and tales are told to highlight the holiness. The long account related to Jagannath-worship at Puri is a case in point. The details refer to its beginning, its background of worship in the forest, the shifting of the Lord from the tribal to the Aryan settlement, the strange story of carving four deities from a strange log of wood etc., and the final installation of Lord Jagannath-worship at Puri, are no longer history found in the pages of Sarala, but have become acceptable current accounts of the Lord. There are references to other places of worship too, for example, to the worship of seven mother-goddesses at Jajpur, eight Sambhus and Gomukha Kesaba on the banks of Prachi, to Sikhareswar Mahadev (Shiva) at

Dhenkanal, to Amarabati Katak, near Chhatia, north of Cuttack, and also to ponds, rivers, mountains considered holy, such as Bindusagar (in Bhubaneswar), Chilika, Mahanadi, Baitarani, Subarnarekha, Kapilas, Nilgir etc., and in most of the places the poet attaches a current legend or a local tale. Though the heroes and the heroines as well as the major characters of *Mahabharat* belong to Hastinapur and to its adjoining areas, their places of activity are in the poet's favourite motherland, Utkal.

The social accounts in Sarala's *Mahabharat* are basically of the 15th century Orissa's. The food-habits, the dresses, sports and entertainment, the education and educational training, way of life, habits and manners, beliefs and superstitions, in fact all aspects of social living belong to Orissa. So also in other matters too, such as marriage, journey, religious functions, in observing fasts and penances, in celebrating festivals, in business, in entertaining a guest, in observing routine household manners, in general up-bringing and ethics as also in rules of warfare - almost everywhere of social or cultural concern, the trend towards Oriyanization is unmistakable. A great epical documentation of Orissa's culture and civilization - that is how Sarals's *Mahabharat* has been accepted.

Sarala's social philosophy also reflects his general liberal attitude towards life. He was not in favour of any high or low status, all were equal to him, irrespective of caste, creed, colour and religion. Thus the food offering of low tribal was as much palatable to God as the offering of the high-caste Brahmin, and the descendants of Jara, the hunter, and Basu, the Brahmin, had the equal rights of worship of Lord Jagannath at Puri, and Bhima, the middle Pandav and the great hero, could forget his royal position, and bring paddy bunches on his shoulders from the fields, knead that into rice, cook that by himself and offer that to Lord Sikhareswar at Kapilas. That is, everybody, from the king to the lowest man in the kingdom, has to take up the moral responsibility

for his work, and everybody has to be accountable for the work he does. Sarala's prescription for a just and responsible king is revealing :

The king should obey the tenets of 'dharma'
He shouldn't ever do what is 'adharma'
He shouldn't make any subject unhappy
The king is happy only when he protects people.

Equally comprehensive was the poet's understanding of religion. By his time the influences of Buddhism and Jainism that were dominant at one time had declined, and Hinduism had come to occupy the dominant position. Sarala's religious faith was as per his time. But it was never dogmatic, and he always maintained a liberal attitude towards religion, and took all types of worship into his ken. The most important God that he worshipped in his *Mahabharat* and put himself as His humblest devotee was Vasudev Krushna whom he equated with Narayana, and again with Sri Jagannath. At the same time his devotion to Goddess Durga was also great, as had been seen in *Chandi Purana*. The *Mahabharat* too, is full of his prayers for Goddess Sarala Chandi of Jhankad, his guardian - deity. But he had also written prayers to all gods and goddesses, such as Shiva, Ganesh, Kartik etc. - the Sakta deities, as well as Rama, Balarama, Parasuram, Baraha, Vaman, Laxmi and Saraswati etc. - the Vaishnav deities, and even such minor deities as Kamadev, Agni, Indradev, Surya and Pavan etc., and also showed awareness of their different areas of operation. In personal faith Sarala was a non-dualist or monist, and like all monists, he admitted twin aspects of the Absolute Being, that is, one given to perception,

You are sound from emptiness not seen
You have no death, no beginning, no middle, no end....

and the other to material exposition

You take so many shapes
You let them form and again you destroy them....

You are fire, water, air and sky....

You have preserved all creatures.

In fact, religion for Sarala was basically man's manners and habits - the way he maintains himself as a responsible and responsive member of the society, not just adhering to this faith or that faith. In this Sarala projected Yudhisthira as the most ideal person, whose religiousness or deep faith in dharma, was not only central to his character but also motivated all his actions and activities :

He has no enemy, he never gets angry

The friends and enemies are same to him

He has no sin, no falsehood....

Sarala's *Mahabharat* is more than an epic recreated. It has many dimensions that freely range from the past to his own times, and even as an implicit impact, to the future. On the one hand we can sense the poet's involvement as a running element in the total structure - the poet's attitudes and points of view as well as his open preferences for one thing or the other. On the other, it was not so much the involvement or the personal point of view, but a detached observation and a running assessment of things as they happened.

Sarala Das planned to write three books - Ramayana, Devi Bhagabat and Mahabharat. He wrote all three. He lived at a time which was a glorious time for Orissa. His books reflected the strength, confidence and ambition of the time, and established the distinctive Oriya identity of the Oriya nation for the first time. He took from many sources, ranging from philosophical and religious to social and political, and his approach to life was one of great tolerance, equanimity and serenity, coupled with great happiness and joy in life in spite of odds and adversities. The individual, the community and the state - he saw them in a totality, and projected that in a wholesomeness which he maintained, should be the goal of human existence in this earth. His literature was not the consummation of a slow process in time. It burst upon an

unsuspecting world, fully formed and achieved, and dazzled everybody, and has gone on dazzling everybody else since then - a strong challenge to the prevailing Sanskrit ideals and norms, in a language that grew from colloquial life, and particularly in the *Mahabharat,* in a metre ('Dandi Brutta') that was remarkably ingenuous and original in its expansiveness and flexibility. In reading Sarala we forget that we are reading the writings of a poet who lived 500 years ago. His experiences become our experiences, and his joys and sorrows also become ours. That is Sarala's main distinction.



4

EPICS

(*i*)

Sarala Das blazed remarkable trail for subsequent growth of Oriya literature. Particularly, the astounding achievement of his *Mahabharat* let writers realize what a powerful creative mind can achieve even from routine, known areas. Besides, to write basing on subjects and themes already familiar with people at large, was an added advantage, because that would immediately establish a rapport with the reading public. Such talents were forthcoming, and within about 50 years after Sarala, by mid-16th century we had three such writers, Balaram Das, Jagannath Das and Achyutananda Das. Balaram Das belonged to Puri ('Purusottam Kshetra') and his probable year of birth was 1473, Jagannath belonged to Kapileswarpur, near Puri, and his probable year of birth was 1490, Achyutananda belonged to Nemala, near Salepur, towards east of Cuttack city, and he was supposed to be born towards the end of 15th century. All three believed in the tenets of Vaishnavism, were associates of Sri Chaitanya, who stayed at Puri for about 18 years, during the reign of Prataprudra Dev (1497-1536), and were great devotees of Sri Jagannath. All three like Sarala, based on Sanskrit original, changed, rearranged and recreated them, added many extra dimensions, and wrote in current and colloquial Oriya to have easy communication. Two of them, Balaram and Achyuta adopted Sarala's singular metrical arrangement, that is 'Dandi Brutta', to have both expansiveness and flexibility. Jagannath alone, adopted a special metrical arrangement for his book - 'Nabakshyari Brutta', that is, 9 letters of alphabet in each line, and end-rhyming couplets. Their books were *Ramayana,* otherwise known as *Jagamohan Ramayana,* by

Balaram Das, *Srimad Bhagabat* by Jagannath Das, and *Harivansa* by Achyutananda Das, three great books that along with Sarala's *Mahabharat* constituted the foundation of Oriya literature, and have variously gone saturating the Oriya mind till now. Prof. Krushna Charan Sahoo, who could not complete the editing of Sarala's *Mahabharat,* had authentically prepared the definitive editions of the rest three. Of these, two, that is *Jagamohan Ramayana* and *Harivansa* are already published, in the years 1995 and 1996 respectively, and *Srimad Bhagabat* is expected to be published soon.

Balaram's deviations from original Sanskrit Ramayana were many. Some of them can be listed as under - in 'Adi Kanda', in the story of Jarata and Kamamohini, public women, getting Rusyasrunga to Ayodha and in the story of Harischandra; in 'Ayodha Kanda', in the account of the Sabaras, in the previous birth of Manthara, in Ramachandra offering oblations to his forefathers at Gaya and the account of Gaya's holiness, in the curses of Ramachandra to Brahmins at the holy places, in Sita's escape from Ravana while he was engaged in the battle with Jatayu and her subsequent arrest by Ravana; in 'Kisikinda Kanda', in the abduction of Lilabati and in the dialogue of Sri Rama with the Crane; in 'Sundara Kanda', in the help given by the squirrel to Ramachandra in the construction of the bridge to Lanka and in Ramachandra worshipping Shiva at Rameswar; and in 'Lanka Kanda', in the story of *Santha Panda*. These are some random examples. In fact Balaram's deviations were continuous and wilful. For example, references to Sri Jagannath, his rituals and glory are scattered throughout *Jagamohan Ramayana.* More specifically the incident of breaking the Bow at Janaka's place may be taken as an instance. In Valmiki, beginning from Viswamitra's request to Janaka to show the Bow to Sri Ram, till Janaka's happiness after the Bow was broken and Janaka's arrangements to send the ministers to Ayodha, the event has 7 sequences or steps. In Balaram

the sequences have been increased to 46, beginning from Viswamitra's request till finally a messenger is sent to Ayodha with Ramachandra's letter. It is not that Balaram only brought in new aspects, he also put in new colours in every description. Thus for example, whereas Sita has no role in Valmiki's account, in *Jagamohan Ramayana* she is very much alert and her reactions at every turn of event are clearly set down. From an indifferent princess who looks at the ceremony detachedly, she becomes one very much involved, talking, laughing, cutting jokes, feeling special affection for Sri Rama, and feeling shy of coming marriage - natural expressions of a young woman on the eve of her marriage. This too is the case when Rama enters into the city of Mithila, Janaka's place. Valmiki does not speak anything about it. But Balaram describes Rama's entry in great detail and with saucy references. This is seen particularly with references to young women, irrespective of whether married or unmarried, who madly ran out of their houses into the streets to have a look at Rama. All their dresses were dishevelled and they all were extremely excited :

They all ran, excited, crazed
And the Love's arrow pierced every heart.
Somebody's clothes slipped from her breasts
Somebody lifted her clothes to show her thighs
Somebody smiled, somebody cast a sidelong glance,
Somebody showed her armpits
Somebody opened her tresses,
And their jewels fell from their hair
And gold chains fell from their neck's
And their flowers were scattered
Their clothes flew like flags in the wind.
They all ran, heavy with youth
Crowded the streets and pushed their elders
And tears of happiness streamed from their eyes.

Another good example of Balaram's deviations and additions

can be seen in the story of rishi Rushyasrunga. In the original Valmiki Ramayana the story is given briefly, as a narration by the charioteer Sumanta to King Dasaratha. Balaram has taken up the main outlines, such as the absence of rain in Angadesha, the King's worries, the advice given to him by the Brahmins and the ministers, the choice of public women to bring Rushyasrunga from the forest, the deception played by the women on Rushyasrunga, the coming of the rishi to Angadesha, and final coming of the rains. But the main outlines have been filled in with innumerable details and with such turns and changes so that an almost functional account of the original epic, now vibrates with the force and excitement of an intense human drama in Balaram. On the one hand, the King's worries and despair at the scarcity of rains and the lack of fertility as related to land, assumes an almost symbolic proportion in modern terms. On the other, as the rishi's innocence is seen along with the urban sexual wiliness of the dancing women, the account is elevated to an almost archetypal form where the primitive purity and innocence is not only matched but is ultimately defeated by wily, permissive urban culture. In addition, there are perceptive accounts of places, natural objects, and of animals and birds as well as the excitement of journey along the river, and the moods of fear, uncertainty and hesitation on the parts of women who go to a distant land almost in a spirit of adventure. The journey by river from Angadesha to the 'forest of four-hills', where Rushyasrunga stayed and back, took 40 days, the poet points out, and it was mostly through impenetrable jungles full of wild and strange animals and birds. This is how the poet narrates :

> And they went through days and nights without rest
> And through innumerable forests and hills
> Dark, impenetrable, fearsome.
> Strange things they saw and strange sights
> And birds and animals, looking astonished, amazed.
> The tigers ran after deer

The lions on elephants, tearing, roaring,
And wild cats quarrel everywhere
And peacocks dance and scream,
And the strange melancholic cry
From inside the deep dark forest.

The account is in much greater detail, and is not only localized, but also shows an almost complete resemblance with Orissan forests, not as they used to be then, 400 years ago, but even now, and the journey appears like a journey along the Mahanadi that goes through impenetrable forests and hills.

Balaram's differences from Valmiki may be summed up, particularly with references to two aspects - the inclusion of new stories in the plot, and the working out of the details of the incidents, in a way, a display of originality in almost all places. Then apart from the examples given above, a different example would be Dasarath's advice to Rama, a day before his coronation. In Valmiki the advice consists of only four couplets, whereas in Balaram it extends to 54 verses and contains minute details of the affairs of a king - "You should always be aware of the fear of your enemy/ You should honour the words of old ministers/ You should not sleep for a long time/ The royal treasury should be in charge of a man who is not greedy/..." etc etc. One feels the advice is not confined only to Ramayana, it had a good deal of relevance even in Balaram's own times and might have some link with his father's high position in King Prataprudra's court. A next, equally interesting and also a different type of example, is the description of Chitrakuta. Valmiki selects a few out of numerous beautiful scenes and describes them in terms of the emotion of Rama. Balaram, in addition, gives a long catalogue of trees, flowers, birds and beasts.

In fact, Balaram's accounts are not only quite localized, but relate to Orissa in general, and to Orissa's prismatic social life and to manners and habits of people. Thus Rama, Lakshman and Sita,

as they moved from forest to forest came to Chandravaga river, and Ramachandi temple near Konark; to '*Ekamra Tirtha*' (Bhubaneswar) and the famous holy pond Bindusagar; to holy shrines on both the banks of Chitrotpala river in the Cuttack district; and to holy bathing-ghats in Rusikullya, the river in the Ganjam district. An apex point in these accounts is reached when Rama, Lakshman and Sita are identified with Jagannath, Balavadra and Subhadra, the presiding deities at Puri temple :

Sri Rama stood before Sri Jagannath
And Lakshman and Balavadra remained by the side,
And Sita and Subhadra met each other.
Three gods were born as human beings
Sri Rama thinks he is Jagannath
And Sita is correctly Subhadra
And Lakshman Balavadra the same.....

The references to Orissa's contemporary social life as well as to systems of warfare are many. The poet speaks of dresses, habits, food and the system of marriage etc. of the Oriyas, and many of the festivals they observe. At the same time he speaks of the king, kingdom, and the military power which was quite distinguished at his time, and about the castles, war-formations, weapons and dresses of the soldiers. The dress worn by a chief when he goes to the battlefield for fighting is as follows :

Dadhimukha, the warrior, joined them
He had a jewel pendant hanging from his neck
Pieces of clothes like flags, fluttered from his arms,
The anklets he had tied on both his legs
And an ornamental girdle round his waist,
And a raised turban on his head
As if a hooded snake is hissing all through,

Similarly, Balaram has incorporated many Oriya festivals in *Jagamohan Ramayana*, which though linked with Rama are at times also linked with Sri Jagannath. Thus, 'Bahuda Dasami', the

10th lunar day in the bright fortnight of *Asadha* (June-July), when Lord Jagannath returns from his 9-day sojourn at Gundicha temple, to his main temple (the end of Car Festival) corresponds with the day Rama returned from banishment, to Ayodha. Or the festival called 'Hari Sayana Ekadasi', which falls on the next day of Bahuda Dasami, when three deities (Jagannath, Balavadra and Subhadra) are placed on the throne at night, corresponds with the day Rama's coronation took place in Ayodha. Then there are many other festivals too, not specially linked with Sri Jagannath, but are quite popular in Orissa even today, and Balaram's such accounts ring quite familiar to us. Some such festivals are, for example, 'Shiva Chaturdasi' (in honour of Shiva), 'Aswina Sukla Navami' (in honour of Sri Durga), 'Magha Saptami' (celebrated at Konark, in honour of Surya), and 'Ashokastami' (celebrated as Car Festival of Lord Lingaraj in Bhubaneswar), 'Baka Panchuka' (The five-day celebration in austerity during the month of *Kartika*, October-November, the holiest of all months), and '*Sudasa Brata*' (celebrated in great austerity by married women wishing prosperity to their husbands). These festivals scattered throughout *Jagamohan Ramayana* as linked with Rama and Sita variously, provide an aura of strong Oriya environment for the stories to grow.

Jagamohan Ramayana has a fine narrative structure. But it has also fine poetic flourishes. Particularly when the poet describes nature, or a woman's beauty, or man-woman relationship, though in almost each case Rama and Sita are involved whom the poet always considers at a higher, superior level, yet often a normal poetic aptitude dominates. Thus this is how he describes the coming of rains at Chitrakuta :

Then the rains came in
The clouds spewed heavy showers
The horizons vanished in streaming rains
All vanished, the forest and trees...
The rivers rose, the ponds got filled

Water trickled down from the mountains
The sun's rays faded in the sky
The trees shivered in violent wind.

Similarly, at the first encounter between Rama and Sita, this is how Rama speaks :

Oh, lady, permit our lips to kiss
You are finest rice, I am hungry,
I will be quiet once I appropriate you.
I'm *chataka* bird, you're sky's water
You are the poison, I am Sadasiva
We are linked, we two, happily,
I am Agasti rishi you are seven seas
You are the night- lotus, I am the moon.

Or, describing Sita's beauty :

The face is like a spotless moon
Seven lotuses inhabit the heart
And face is like a blooming lotus,
The hands are like two lotus-stems
And the doe-eyed girl carries two lotuses on feet.

Balaram's great work was not motivated only to narrate a story, or to recreate an epic, but also to provide something with a strong devotional content. That was the need of the time through which it was possible to establish the necessary rapport with the readers. *Jagamohan Ramayana* was full of devotional strain. Beginning with Sri Jagannath, the poet's most intimate deity, to whom his obeisance was complete ("I submit to you, Oh, Lord/ Oh you Conch and Wheel-handed Lord, protect me/ You help all those who come to you,/ Oh Lord, I submit without fear."), he goes over to many other deities, and always to Rama and Sita. Balaram's religiousness had a few guiding principles that can be listed as under - (1) follow the path of dharma, (2) speak the truth, (3) do not show pride, (4) speak softly, (5) do not give pain to others, (6) do not laugh at your elders, (7) show proper respect to

guests and gods, and (8) have devotion for God of gods (that is, Sri Jagannath). In a way, they were the ideals of a saint's life then widely current, and at one level, Balaram conducted his life like that of a saint, and his great work was an expression of his saintly attitude towards life. Kaikeyi's exhortation to Dasaratha in 'Ayodha Kanda' on 'Satya' (Truth) is a pointer to the poet's own attitude *towards life. It runs :*

In satya the sea never crosses its shore
In satya Madhav takes his incarnations
In satya Lord Shiva drinks poison
In satya six seasons cover the earth
In satya medicines cure diseases
In satya the sun rises in the sky
In satya the Mandara mountain never rises
In satya the poles hold the earth
In satya the world is created
In satya Parvati killed the demon
In satya wind blows
In satya fire burns...

The basic purposes of both Balaram and Sarala were to promote the knowledge and experiences of the great epics among the common men who had no access to Sanskrit originals. The style of writing and the language they used also conformed to this primary purpose. They depended on contemporary conversational language and used a metrical pattern which had a poetical rhythmicality combined with the elasticity and freedom of prose. This, as we have already pointed out, was called 'Dandi' metre or 'Dandi brutta', and since the epics were meant to be read out, the auditory aspect was important, and the metre move like the waves of the sea, rising and falling, stretching and contracting, without being monotonous, and the attention of the listeners is kept up in the relaxed, lazy hours of the evenings when the villagers gather together after the day's work. Also what they hear linguistically, is

only an extension of their daily routine of conversation so that the mind is not unnecessarily taxed to comprehend new words or new verbal conjugation of words. Both Sarala and Balaram used contemporary Oriya language with great skill and dexterity. At the same time they succeeded in imposing a form and discipline on the wild nebulosity of the contemporary speech, which not only communicated its essential strength but else became a model for a large number of subsequent writers. It is to be noted that Balaram's distinction like Sarala's, was a singular one. He was not only the first, but the greatest writer who adopted the original Ramayana and made of it a great Oriya epic.

(ii)

Jagannath Das wrote Bhagabat, entitled *Srimad Bhagabat* in the early decades of the 16th century, that has risen in popularity to the extent that is has become integral with the consciousness of the nation, and till recent times, by itself it became a continuous socio-religious movement throughout Orissa, and even outside Orissa wherever the Oriyas are settled. Every Oriya household thought it to be a necessary part of the family, with which it should be generally acquainted and read portions of it almost daily, and considered that a complete reading of the *Bhagabat* constituted a complete education. Then there was its other aspect, that in the days of difficulties, a reading of *Bhagabat* would bring necessary solace and strength, and a belief that still persists, mostly in villages, that for a person in death-bed, listening to the *Bhagabat*, particularly the Eleventh Skanda, brings a divine-contact and releases the person concerned from mortal bondages. In short, *Srimad Bhagabat's* popularity is immense, and it is reckoned today as the most popular book in the entire domain of Oriya literature, and in public estimation given a place only next to Lord Jagannath of Puri.

The reasons for *Bhagabat's* popularity are many. First, its

language. Though two remarkable models, how a long narrative poem could be written, that is, Sarala's *Mahabharat* and Balaram's *Ramayana,* were available to Jagannath, in language-use he steered clear of both. He neither accepted their 'Dandi brutta', nor accepted their emphasis on folk-based language. But he accepted their bold experiments on ancient epics, and next to the Mahabharat and the Ramayana, he took up the next best work, that is, the Bhagabat, Though, like the earlier two writers, he was well-versed in Sanskrit, and composed works in Sanskrit, he knew that his most important work has to be done in Oriya. He did it, without whatsoever any hesitation, because that was the need of the time - need of a nation getting to its roots, and already two great writers had shown the way. But he devised a new arrangement. He wrote out his narration in even rhyming couplets, and in 9 letters of alphabet in each line, which subsequently came to be known as 'Nabakshyari Chhanda' or 'Nine-letter Metre'. That no doubt was a limitation, a curtailing of freedom in comparison to what was available to Sarala or Balaram, but it brought in uniformity as well as musicality, like a soft song being sung, having a patting sensation on the readers. Then, the words that he chose were from contemporary conversational language, but not from a rustic or folk-based environment, but from educated speech around him (at Puri, the Capital), a good mix of easy, simple Sanskrit words that could be easily understood and had become a natural part of contemporary speech - the words that have perpetuated till now, as 'standard Oriya'. Then the way of writing, which is neither hurried nor slow, and the tone of a good-natured friend, who is out to give you advice on occasions, but always with an intention of doing you good, and often touching your imagination incorporating familiar images and references. The skill in 'translation' is also another reason. No, he did not translate from the original, he also took liberty as Sarala and Balaram did. But he was, in comparison to the other two, much closer to the original, and what he did can be more aptly

called as 'free translation', that is, he kept to the original text, but instead of translating word for word, he transferred the drift of ideas and put in additional dimensions wherever he thought the text needed analysis or explanation. Pandit Gopinath Nanda, writing on *Bhagabat* in 1925, referred to this process when he said that while keeping the text in front or apprehending the text, Jagannath did the translation in an 'extempore' way. But Prof. K.C. Sahoo points out what may be an important reason for *Bhagabat's* popularity, that is, its religiousness. "There never was a tradition in Orissa", he says, "to consider *Bhagabat* as a work of literature. It was for the nation the Gita, the Upanisad, the Vedas and the Puranas combined together, and it promoted the greatness of the Name of the God *(Nama Mahatmya)*." Probably that is correct. The devotional aspect of *Srimad Bhagabat* is its most adorable aspect. Innumerable lines from the book - pithy sayings, have become an integral part of the mass-consciousness and mass-speech on very many occasions of weal and woe to the individual.

As in Sarala and Balaram, Jagannath too, begins *Bhagabat* with an invocation to divine beings. Sarala prays to Devi Durga, Balaram to Sri Jagannath, Jagannath invokes Nrusimha or Narasimha :

> I bow at the feet of Narasimha
> the Supreme Primordial Being
> Whose beginning, middle and end
> Beyond world's comprehension,
> Who is beyond senses
> And manifested as Truth every moment,
> Who gladly passed on the Vedas to Brahma
> And whom no Vedic figure ever knows...
> You are the Truth, the Happiness, oh, Hari,
> Wise men meditate on your feet
> And escape from this world.

The poet refers to Narasimha in other places too, as in the beginning

of the '11th Skanda' :

I bow at the feet of Narasimha
The Supreme Primodial Being,
Unknown to gods and men
Always manifested through dalliances
through illusory worlds,
And whose name is like a rafter
In the vast waters of the world.

Narasimha is equated with Sri Vishnu, and again with Sri Jagannath and Sri Krushna, and the whole of *Bhagabat* rings with the God's praise, and the poet's complete devotion to Him. Devotion to Lord, otherwise called *Bhakti* or *Bhakti Yoga*, is the prime motivation of *Bhagabat*. The poet refers to *Karma* (action) and *Jnana* (wisdom) and points out how they have their limitations. But in *Bhakti* it is not so, it is complete and absolute - "Whoever worships me/ He is not different form me", and again, "Be always with good men/ In the ways of pure devotion", or "Give up all your actions and their fruits/ Worship me alone". Thus a man given to *bhakti* gets complete release, as in the '3rd Skanda', in the words of 'Bhagavan' :

All my virtues and glories
Whoever goes to listen daily,
And worships me as prime shelter
That has no division no illusion,
He gets released from the coils of work.
As the rivers merge in the sea and become one
That way all people worshipping me
Merge in me and become one.

and again in the '11th Skanda' :

Whoever glories in hearing my name and chanting my name
He participates in *bhakti*
And moves beyond the worldly bondages.
I am all for him
All my kindness go to him

He attains all excellence

And gets freed from all action.

The five chapters devoted to *Rasa*, that is, Krushna dancing with the Gopis, the cowherdesses, constitute a remarkable expression of *bhakti*.

The *Rasa* chapters are in the 10th Skanda, (30th to 35th chapters) in the first part, that is, the part devoted to Sri Krushna's life at Gopa, called 'Gopa Lila'. The time was autumn time, hence the dancing details or the *Rasa* is popularly known as *Sarada*, that is, autumn, *Rasa*. The entire sequence has two levels. At one level the elaboration of the content, reference to people involved, their joys and reactions, and the physical activities and physical bodily unions, in short, the localized familiar mundane level which is seen and experienced physically. The other is mostly a mental one, a deeper one, one may say, where the relationship goes beyond what is seen and experienced, a relationship that is assumed, beyond all local details - an eternal, invincible relationship between the God and the devotee, and the dancing is only a joyous entry into the devotee's oneness with his God, and the union is a complete mental and spiritual union, of the form with the formless, an intense achievement in *bhakti*.

Thus the account of *Rasa* is apparently physical - the youthful excited women meeting with the person they desire most, in an intimate bodily union. But deeper down it is a different union, the union of the devotee with her object of devotion. This is indicated in the beginning :

Govinda thought to himself

We will unite at Brundavan today,

The sixteen thousand women of Gopa

Have adored me through meditation.

They are my devotees, in great faith,

I will fulfil all their desires now.

In austerities through many births

They are now born as women of Gopa
I will cohabit, return them to their places
And release them from all earthly bondages.

The time was propitious :

It was autumn time
The wind blew clean and clear,
The moon was in the sky
The night clear, transparent,
The flowers bloomed both in land and water
The fragrance cool, invaluable...

Krushna felt happy, took his flute and blew on it :

Calling Gopis by name
The flute called them sweetly...
They heard, got excited
Couldn't put their minds in work
Their hands and legs didn't move
The bodies shivered in sex-urge....
And they ran, avoiding each other
Dishevelled, restless.

They all met Krushna, in the forest, under the full moon, all social restrictions were put aside, and each Gopi found a Krushna. They all danced, sang and cohabited in great abandon :

One's hand held by another
The Braja women danced in abandon,
And in endless illusion, in Yoga,
He took sixteen thousand forms
A Govinda for each Gopi...
And Gopis danced with great joy
With thousands of charming gods of love
Like golden walls stuck in the midst of blue hills...
They all danced sang and pleased Narahari,
Their feet moved in formations
The eyes winked

The clothes slipped from breasts
And they all danced clapping.

That is *Rasa*, the acme of *bhakti*, a state of complete surrender and complete union, when the devotee becomes one with the object of devotion, where the physical details are transcended in a unique perception of spiritual unity.

Jagannath Das's analysis and establishment of *bhakti* in men's life, is one of *Bhagabat's* most important motivations. It was religious no doubt, strongly reflecting contemporary Vaishnav attitudes, Jagannath himself being a strong believer in the faith. That was also the need of the time, to provide necessary mental strength and support to people at a time when the outward dispensation was not all right. At the same time, the poetic value of the book is not to be missed, an aspect in which, in spite of his preference for *bhakti*, Jagannath compares favourably both with Sarala and Balaram. Thus, this is how he describes the coming of rains :

The clouds gathered in space
Lightening flashed, thunders rolled,
And blue clouds moved all over the world,
And spread over land, sea and space
Like a vast, compact sky.

Similarly, the spring :

The murmuring of streams
The sharp whistling noise of grasshoppers
The pattering noise of soft raindrops
The waves in rivers and flower gardens trembling in the wind
And all the flowers in water
Lotus, night-lotus -
The wind picks up their pollens and blows.

It has been noted how Jagannath made free translation from Sanskrit. But his variation in contrast to Sarala's and Balaram's, were not many, and he generally kept close to the original. He

completed his *Bhagabat* in 11 Skandas as against original Sanskrit's 12, and from a total 335 chapters in Sanskrit (from 1 to 12) he made into 328 chapters (from 1 to 11). Two more Skandas were added subsequently, the 12th written by his disciple Mahadev Das and the 13th by one Dwaraka Das. Both in Sanskrit as well as in Jagannath the purpose was the same, that is, to highlight Krushna as a divine incarnation, and to focus on his life, beginning from the environment of his birth, through his activities at Gopa, Mathura, Dwaraka and Hastinapur etc., till his final exit. But whereas in Sanskrit, Krushna's account or exploits are narrated only in two Skandas, that is, the 10th and the 11th, Jagannath Das brought in few more Skandas to describe Krushna's life, and provided a larger frame of narration in general, that also included references to the system of creation in the process of time, as well as to a number of earlier mythological royal dynasties and to important individuals (also mythological) and their activities. But Jagannath's deviations or improvements on Sanskrit were amply vindicated. *Srimad Bhagabat* continues to be an extremely popular work even now, and the acceptance it has received from the readers is unequalled by any other book by any other author. Its deep religious motivation wedded to social and character-upliftment, along with a structure of language - a familiar conversational exposition and musicality, and poetic flourishes, all together contribute to that status.

(iii)

Achyutananda's *Harivansa* was almost a unique creation. The poets in different Indian languages at that time did translations or adaptations from mostly the Ramayana, the Mahabharat and the Bhagabat. There was hardly anybody who did so with the Harivansa, though it was an important work to propagate the glories and activities of Sri Krushna. Achyuta was probably the first poet in whole of India who took up Sanskrit Harivansa as a source to

work with. In Sanskrit, the Harivansa was written as an appendix of the Mahabharat, and was called 'Khila Parva'. Its aim was to narrate the early years of Sri Krushna, the greatest person of the Mahabharat, and its subject matter was indicated in the Introduction of the Mahabharat. By Achyuta's time outsourcing Sanskrit epics and Puranas into Oriya had already begun. Sarala had composed Mahabharat in 18 Parvas, Balaram *Ramayana* in 7 Skandas, and Jagannath *Bhagabat* in 11 Skandas. Besides, Sarala had also written *Chandi Purana.* Thus the tradition had been well-established, and Achyutananda who probably wrote *Harivansa* towards the end of the 16th century, wrote it in 7 Parts, as against Sanskrit's in 3 Parts. The divisions in Sanskrit were as follows - 1. 'Harivansa Parva', 2. 'Vishnu Parva', and 3. 'Bhabisya (future) Parva'. Achyuta's seven divisions were under - 1. 'Kansa's Digbijay' (Kansa's Invasions), 2. 'Krushna Janma' (Krushna's Birth), 3. '*Rasa*' (*Rasa*), 4. 'Ananda Lahari' (The Waves of Happiness), 5. 'Astadasa Dhadi' (Eighteen Attacks), 6. 'Asta Patabansi Bibha' (The Marriage with Asta Patabansis) and 7. 'Mathura Mangala' (Benefits to Mathura).

The titles of different Parts of *Harivansa* are suggestive of the development of subject matter, which generally correspond with the subject matter of the latter part of 'Harivansa Parva' and the whole of 'Vishnu Parva' of Sanskrit Harivansa. Thus in *Harivansa* the 1st Part deals with the events in Mathura before Krushna's birth, including Kansa's invasions and his rule in Mathura, killing of Devaki's first son, and the prayer of gods and Basumati (Mother Earth) to Vishnu to save all of them from Kansa, and Vishnu's decision to do so. The IInd Part deals with Devaki's ordeals, Krushna and Balaram's birth, Krushna's growing up period at Gopapura, ending with Jasoda's vision of the universe inside Krushna's mouth. The IIIrd Part continues Krushna's activities at Gopa including killing of demons, the relationship with Radha, *Rasa* with Radha and Gopis, movement to Mathura and Krushna's activities in Mathura ending with the death of Kansa. The IVth

Part deals with the relief in Mathura after Kansa's death (hence 'Ananda Lahari'), Ugrasena's coronation, Rishi Gargaba's insult at Mathura court and his union with Gopabali and birth of Kala Javan, Krushna and Balaram's education at Sandipani's place, partial account of Rukmini's Swayamvar which was broken up by Garuda, and Krushna and Balaram's return to Mathura. The Vth Part deals with the details of Rukmini's Swayamvar, Sri Krushna's marriage to Rukmini, Balaram's marriage to Rebati, Krushna's marriages to Sriya, Satyabati, Kalandi, Kamala, Tulasi, Jambabati and Satyavama ('Patabansis'), Krushna's involvement with the Pandavas and killing of Jarasandha, and Yudhisthira's Rajasuya Jajna. The VII Part, though named 'Mathura Mangala' has nothing to do with Mathura. It deals with Krushna's last days and his final departure from earth, including the destruction of the Jadu clan, and the emergence of Sri Krushna as Sri Jagannath at Nilagiri (Puri) through his half-burnt body (a log) that came floating there. As can be seen *Harivansa* is a complete account of Krushna's life from birth till his last exit, as a whole motivated to sing the glories of Sri Krushna as a great hero.

Apart from Sanskrit Harivansa, Achyutananda was also guided by the similar accounts contained in the Bhagabat, particularly the 10th Skanda of Bhagabat, whose subject matter shows a close similarity with that of *Harivansa.* Essentially Achyutananda was a learned man. Therefore in writing *Harivansa* and singing the glories of Sri Krushna he took inspiration from many sources. Thus beginning from 18 Puranas, particularly 'Brahmanda', 'Matshya' and 'Bhabisya' etc., the poet's indebtedness can be traced to such others as Jayadev, Chandidas, and Sarala etc. We have noted how the main frame of *Harivansa* was borrowed from about half of Sanskrit Harivansa, from the birth of Kansa and his tyrannical administration to Krushna's final exit. Yet, it has also been noted, how the poet made changes as per his need. Thus, though in Sanskrit Harivansa the *Rasa Lila* is narrated in a

brief passage, Achyutananda gives an elaborate account of the same, and the model was probably Bhagabat. But even then when he pinpointed the dalliance of Radha and Krushna, it was neither Harivansa nor Bhagabat, but the source was Jayadev's *Gita Govinda,* the poems of Chandidas and other Padavali poets, and Sarala's *Mahabharat,* from where he took and enriched his poetry. And again, for example, even though an episode like the snake Kaliya's chastisement, could be traced both to Sanskrit Harivansa and Bhagabat, yet the poet's imagination made it largely different from what it was before. The point is, though Achyuta maintained the prevalent Puranic tradition, at the same time he coloured it with his own imagination, put in his own intense feelings of devotion, and showed his sharp awareness of contemporary social manners and habits, and on the whole, made out a work of remarkable quality.

A good example of Achyutananda's recreations could be seen in the episode of Krushna stealing the clothes of Gopis while they were bathing. The incident was not in Sanskrit Harivansa, but it was earlier narrated in Bhagabat. But in Bhagabat the sequences were different. There the Gopis were amorously inclined towards Krushna, and had worshipped Goddess Durga for a month to get him as their husband. For ending their penance (*brata*) they went to river Jamuna. While they were bathing naked and their clothes were kept on the shore, Krushna came and saw to it that their clothes were taken away by the wind to a high branch of Kadamba tree on the bank. On seeing Krushna, the Gopis felt happy that their brata had become successful, but they were reluctant to come out of water naked. But finally at the direction of Krushna they came out unhesitatingly. That pleased him, and he returned their clothes to them, and assured them that he would fulfil their desires and meet them as per their wish. The Gopis all ended their brata and returned happily. In Achyuta's *Harivansa* the environment is different. Here the Gopis were neither

amorously inclined towards Sri Krushna, nor had they worshipped Sri Durga to get him as their husband, nor did they go to Jamuna to end their brata. It was summer time, and the day being an auspicious day ('Akshaya Trutiya') they had decided to go to Jamuna for bathing - a natural sight in the villages beside a river which Achyutananda's own village was. They arranged their hair, took oil and turmeric-paste, put on ornaments and good clothes, and eagerly, to get themselves free for a while from family compulsions, they walked together to Jamuna to get its cool, refreshing contact.

The women got ready as per their taste,
One called the other by name,
'Wait, wait', said somebody, and jumped to the front,
Somebody shouted, 'Oh, come, come, come quick'...
Their bodies' colour shone like burnt-gold
Like stars shining in half-sky.
Thus the Gopis went to Jamuna,
Somebody ahead, somebody at the back
Somebody crossed others quickly...

Initially they were worried about what their people would say. But slowly, as they moved, their minds became free, and their movements became free and playful :

The bangles sounded sweetly and strangely
The anklets tingled around their feet,
They quoted saws and sayings,
And sang funny songs...

On reaching Jamuna and on seeing the cool, clear water of the river at that summer time, the women were highly tempted, and since the place was quite lonely, they kept all their ornaments and clothes on the shore, and fully naked, rushed into water. Bathing was all right. But the women in their temporary release from their families were also in a free mood. They splashed water at each other, swam, sang and shouted:

Water of Jamuna flowed murmuringly
Holy clean river it was
And they rubbed their feet and hands with fragrance
The ornaments and clothes were kept on the shore
They all forgot that in their games in water.

Krushna was herding cows at a distance, heard the noise, came closer to the river, and saw the naked frolicking Gopis in water and also saw their clothes and ornaments on the shore. He thought of a mischief, removed the clothes and ornaments to a distance to a Kadamba tree, and himself stayed there half-hidden. Bathing finished, the Gopis came to the shore, got highly intrigued in not finding their clothes and ornaments, did not know what to make of it and looked here and there desperately. Then suddenly they saw Krushna swinging in the tree and their clothes etc. They could know who the mischief-maker was, but still could not understand how alone he could remove all those clothes and ornaments to a distance. But immediately they rushed back to water to hide their nakedness and requested Krushna to return their clothes to them :

The Gopis looked at Krushna and said
Oh, Krushna, why did you do that ?
We are all your aunts, relatives
It does not become of you to do this,
Please, give us our ornaments, clothes
How else we would go home ?
We will be scolded, rebuked, you know...

But Krushna did not comply. Then altercations followed, the Gopis abused Krushna, cursed him. Finally, a compromise was reached. The Gopis agreed to Krushna's request for sexual union with them all, as they were sure that would not be possible as they were so many and Krushna was only one. But Krushna in his *maya* (illusion) created himself into as many persons as there were Gopis, and the *Rasa Krida* (Rasa-game) took place in the loneliness of the adjoining forest (*Kunja*) :

Govinda could make Gopis agree to his request
The all-charming person got amorously excited,
The godly person descended from the Kadamba tree
The women came out of Jamuna's water,
He assumed a figure each for each Gopi
All-pleasing, all Gopis pleased,
The bodies mingled in the arbour
Secretly, privately,
And none else could know about the amorous game.

The play of Achyutananda's creative imagination could be seen in many other places of *Harivansa* too. Another brief and good example relates to Jasoda's vision of the universe in the mouth of child Krushna. When the complain came against Krushna that he was swallowing earth at will, Jasoda in anger, with a view to give Krushna a good thrashing, opened his mouth to check. And then :

So said Govinda and opened his mouth
and Jasoda looked inside with eyes open
The whole universe she could see
The earth, the heaven and nether world,
The gods, the human beings, the saints
All inside, to the remotest space,
The suns, the moons, nine islands, seven seas
All inside the mouth of Govinda....

The 'vision' is graphic, all comprehending, and shows the poet's depth of perception.

Differently, the poet's range of understanding is also remarkable. For example, we may note his references to Utkal (Orissa), a national pride comparable to Sarala's similar pervasive references. First, among the kings invited to Kansa's Bow-Celebration the kings of Kalinga and Odra were also included. Then, various holy places, and gods and goddesses, such as, Sri Purusottam (Puri) and Koili Baikuntha therein; Konark and

universally worshipped Biranchi or Sun-God, and the river Chandrabhaga; Ekamra Kanan (Bhubaneswar) and God Lingaraj, Anant Vasudeb, and holiest of ponds, Bindusagar; the river Baitarani and the Goddess Biraja (Jajpur), as well as Chitrotpala, the holiest of all rivers, on whose banks innumerable saints, sidhas and rishis inhabit, and on its south, the secret Varanasi, the place of Lord Visweswar etc. In short, Achyutananda, like his predecessors, never lost an opportunity to sing of Utkal and its holy places whenever such occasions arose. Similarly, talking of education that Rama and Krushna received at Sandipani's place, the poet was eloquent about the virtues of education ('Vidya') - "Vidya is eye above eye/ Vidya elevates parents and the sons/... Vidya is Guru above Guru/ Vidya is God/ Vidya enables to see past, present, future/ The worlds exist because of Vidya/ And Vidya moves the sun and the moon in the sky." (IV Part). Another interesting reference in Achyutananda is related to items of war and warfare, in which he also compares favourably with Sarala and Balaram. Apart from artillery and cavalry, he speaks of various war-weapons, war-formations, war-training, war logistics, as well as of castles, the type of protection given to castles, attacks on castles and strategy of invasions etc. - a distinct reflection of the times he lived in, a time full of military invasions and prowess.

Harivansa was deeply ingrained in the contemporary Vaishnav faith, and is being considered as one of the two great works related to Vaishnavism in Orissa, the other being Jagannath Das's *Bhagabat.* The greatest emphasis in the Vaishnavite frame is usually put on Radha and Krushna, and on the intensity of their mutual relationship, particularly on *Rasa Lila*, where Krushna's flute, whose sweet notes mesmerized everybody, plays a prominent part, and Radha emerges as the heroin and as the central figure. Sanskrit Harivansa does not refer to the flute, neither to Radha. Its account of *Rasa Lila* is brief and functional, where the Gopis standing in a circle, with Krushna on both the sides of each Gopi,

all engaged in song and dance, with Gopi's singing the glories of Sri Krushna. In the Bhagabat *Rasa Lila* is depicted more elaborately. But it also did not have Radha, only the flute, which Krushna played 'sweetly' naming the Gopis, who restlessly ran to him, to Brundaban, where in the moonlit night, on the bank of Jamuna, the *Rasa Lila* was enacted, where Krushna took 'sixteen thousand' separate figures and united with the Gopis. In *Harivansa* we come across three types of *Rasa Lila*.The first comes from the Bhagabat, the love-union and dances of the Gopis with Krushna (*Gopi Krushna Keli*), popularly known as *Sarada Rasa*, as it was enacted in the autumn time. The second comes from the accounts of the Vaishnavs who belonged to Bengal, Sri Chaitanya's own place ('Gaudiya Vaishnav'). There were, as in the Bhagabat, only Gopis and Krushna, with the difference that the *Rasa Lila* did not take place under the open sky, but inside the forest, under tree-cover, and in houses built by Viswakarma for each of the Gopi's where Krushna in his *maya* united with all the Gopis (*Kunja Lila*). The last one had its source in Jayadeva's *Gita Gobinda,* Sarala's *Mahabharat* and in *Sri Krishna Kirtan* by Badu Chandi Das. The *Rasa* took place in the company of Radha, in the spring, and hence called *Basanta Rasa* (*Radha Krushna Keli*).

In *Harivansa's Rasa* account, all three got united and were enacted as one. Particularly Achyuta's references to Sri Radha, his elaboration, establishment and development of Radha as a cult-figure, is his singular contribution to Vaishnavite tradition. Thus, when Sri Krushna's queens like Rukmini, Satyavama etc. expressed doubts about his peculiar fascination for Sri Radha, he took them, back in time, to a virtual reality of Gopapura and the life he had led there, and to Sri Radha. Achyuta's Radha was not like Vidyapati's who had crossed her youth, nor like Gaudiya Vaisnavite Padavali poets, who had eternal youth, but she had other dimensions. She did not belong to the earthly dispensation. She was eternally manifested in eternal divinity, eternal companion of the eternal *Rasa* of the God (*nitya rasa* or *nitya lila*). That is why,

she came before Krushna came, not through usual process of birth, but self-manifested on a lotus-leaf whom the Brusavanu king found out and reared as a daughter ("The servants looked around hearing the cry/ Was it the moon in a new-moon night, they felt/ Saw a girl lying on a lotus-leaf/ Beauty more than the beauty of million Ratis/ No comparison in the three worlds/ The body as if smeared with saffron/ It burns like smokeless fire. (*Harivansa,* 7th Part), and she would be returning along with Sri Krushna to the eternal abode. The eight Patabansi queens understood their mistake, had the vision of Sri Radha, burning like 'smokeless fire', as the eternal companion in eternal *Rasa* of Sri Krushna ("He had Radhika on his left/ Their lips had joined/ His red lips kissed her's/ Their faces were one/ And the eight ladies were playing on cymbals and harps/ And the lotus-eyed playing eternal *Rasa* happily"), and the ladies were afraid, and sang the glories of Sri Radha.

Harivansa, along with *Mahabharat, Jagamohan Ramayana,* and *Srimad Bhagabat,* had many virtues. First of all, they were fine narrative accounts with innumerable sequences of events, characters, stories, tales, references as well as ways of living and manners and habits of living, and severally as well as together, they established a strong tradition of narratology that was picked up by many other authors subsequently. Secondly, they were fine and very comprehensive social documents, a total reflection from individual to community-living, that were prevalent for about 200 years in Orissa, in the 15th and 16th centuries - the picture of the State and the story of the nation as a whole, Thirdly, they had distinct religious motivations, of attitudes and perceptions, as well as of systems, rituals and functioning, that were linked with prevalent religious traditions and also cut across them to devise new ones. Lastly, it was the language they used, which they freely took from contemporary colloquial and conversational areas, and also devised methods to use them freely. Three of them, Sarala, Balaram and Achyuta had a delicious mix of prose virtues with

poetry, and used rhythms that were flexible and strong at the same time, and established easy communication with the listening and reading public. Jagannath slightly deviated, he used traditional end-on rhymes. But he too devised a new letters-of-alphabet arrangement, and made a palatable mix of colloquial words with easily understood and acceptable 'elite' words (*tatchama*). They all aimed at promoting social reform and cohesiveness as well as character-building as a whole, to find out how man can live in benignity and goodness, in peace with each other. It is the greatest good fortune for Oriya literature that due to political stability and an upbeat mood which the nation experienced for about a hundred years, from the mid-fifteenth till the mid-sixteenth, that such great creative works, *Mahabharat, Jagamohan Ramayana, Srimad Bhagabat* and *Harivansa* could be written, that solidly and substantially laid the foundation of Oriya literature to grow and develop. Particularly one may note a few excellent works that were subsequently written under their inspiration. Thus for example Radha-Krushna theme inspired Dinakrushna's *Rasa Kallol* (17th - 18th centuries) and Abhimanyu's *Bidagdha Chintamoni* (18th century); and Rama-Sita story inspired Upendra Bhanja's *Baidehisa Vilas* (18th century) and Gangadhars' *Tapaswini* (1915). These are only a few samples. The influence of the great epics written in the beginning, had percolated and fertilized Oriya literature in many more ways.



5

BHAKTI LITERATURE

(i)

Bhakti literature, particularly as a strong body of poetry, grew up in the mid- and later half of the 16th century, along with the great epical works. But it had a different format and different motivation in comparison to the epics. They were not narrative ones, neither the poems aimed at telling a story or figuring a character or organising sequences of events. But they had strong points of view, aimed at putting forth a philosophy, or a way of living, and more importantly, were concerned with attitudes of devotion, religiousness and spiritualism where they were, to a large extent, at par with the epics. The poems were not long ones, invariably short in length, particularly the poems expressing devotional attitudes were short, lyrical pieces. In fact Oriya Bhakti poetry has two general dimensions, one related to an elaboration of traditional religious wisdom, a non-personal system of faith, an involvement in mental attainments and Yogic disciplines, known differently as 'Jnana Yoga' and 'Karma Yoga'. The other dimension is personal, even at times intimately personal, and can be seen in two categories, one *janana* and the other *bhajana*. The former, that is *janana*, refers to poems of prayer - prayer to specific gods and goddesses, that have forms and have also places of worship, and who, devotees believe, always do them good. The latter, the *bhajana* is not strictly a prayer, it is almost like meditation, meditating on a formless being, on complexity of man's propensities towards spiritual or divine bearings. This may be differently called 'Bhakti Yoga'. Oriya Bhakti poetry or Bhakti literature has all three aspects - *Jnana*, *Karma* and *Bhakti*. In the

poems they can be seen severally, and also in best of the pieces, as one, an integrated whole, providing a complex exposition. Similarly, in *Bhakti*, the twin aspects, *janana* and *bhajana* can be located, both separately and also together, and the poems equally provide a complex structure.

Thus the Bhakti poets of Orissa did not accept *premabhakti*, or devotion through love, a normal Vaishnavite practice, as the only way for self-purification. They also put emphasis on devotion and loyalty to *guru* or teacher, on *tantra* (tantra), *mantra* (mantra), *japa* (silent prayer) and Yoga. One may say, what they provided was a good mix of *jnana* with *bhakti*. Then, there is the declaration - that is, they maintained that the temples are not the only places where one can come in contact with god. In fact, the best place where one can come in contact with god is one's own body, provided one remains pure and virtuous and can go through necessary meditation, prayer and Yogic discipline. That is, if a person can move his *Kundalini* power through *ida, pingala* and *susumna* nerve-channels, to *brahma randhra* (Brahma Hole) and beyond, then only he will have vision of Paradise (*Baikuntha*) and will have an opportunity to participate in the divine union of Radha and Krushna. The result would be a complete purification of one's own soul. Then again, it is further maintained, that for this purpose the Primal God is Sri Jagannath of Sri Kshetra (Puri), who is not just an incarnation, but the Source from where all incarnations have emerged. He is Vishnu Himself, complete with 'sixteen aspects' (*sola kala*), and His place, Purusottam Kshetra (Puri) is 'Paradise'. The poets consider themselves as His 'slaves' (*dasa*) and believe that meditation and prayers directed towards Him will enable one to attain final beatitude. That is their difference from the Vaishnavas of Bengal (Gaudiya), they did not imagine themselves as Radha as the latter did, pining for the love-embrace of the Great God. On the other hand, they put themselves in position of the God's 'servants' (*dasanudasa*). That was their forte. By that

they could achieve a much larger acceptance of their faith, irrespective of caste or creed, and could elevate their Bhakti dharma to an almost universal one.

The faith of the Bhakti poets, and the way they propagated it, was the need of the time. The times were difficult, and needed a strong sustaining force which the Bhakti poetry supplied. Prataprudra died in 1538, and as if that was the signal for the destroying forces to get loose. His two sons, Kalua Dev and Kakharua Dev were minors and were almost nonentities, and were quickly murdered in succession by Prataprudra's ambitious minister Govinda Vidyadhar, who usurped the throne and founded a new dynasty, called the 'Bhoi Dynasty'. Govinda Vidyadhar ruled from 1540 to 1549. He was followed by his son Chakrapratap who ruled from 1549 to 1557. He was murdered by his own son Narasimha Jena (1557-1558) who in turn was murdered by one Mukunda Harichandan, the then Governor of Katak, who emerged as the ruler of Orissa in 1560 and ruled till 1568. The condition was chaotic. In fact, the spirit that had risen high in the 15th century with the advent of Kapilendra Dev had appreciably fallen low by the third decade of the 16th century, and came to a depth of despair by the time Prataprudra passed away. After that, for about 30 years, till 1568, it was a horrifying tale of continuous intrigues and murders, manifestation of man's basest instincts, and a sad sequel to the glorious days of Suryavansi rulers. The change of guards in 1568 only aggravated the situation when the local roots were cut off by an indifferent, unscrupulous and self-motivated administration. All had a telling effect on the contemporary conditions of living. Sarala's *Mahabharat* and *Chandi Purana* etc. in the 15th century were the joyous songs of a nation in an upbeat mood, when the nation crossed shackles to burst forth into power and glory. The mood changed in the 16th, when it became one of helplessness and defeat, of indiscipline and insecurity. A different creative vision was necessary to bind the nation together, to put

hope and strength in the losing hearts, no longer the poet who marches ahead and carries the standards of victory and glory, but has to be a teacher, a moral preceptor, who can enlighten mental darkness, and can bind together the failing hearts in new solidarity and strength. The Oriya Bhakti poets in the 16th century, the so called 'Pancha Sakhas', the Five Friends or Five Companions did all that. They cut across caste distinction, wrote in a language which all could understand, about such subjects that were related to people's faith, habits and manners, in a way which put them in close companionship with their reading and responding public, and in general, provided hope and strength to a losing and defeated nation - a singular phenomena that did not have any royal or military support, but rose to be a mass-movement, and flourished in the trust and confidence of the masses.

The nomenclature 'Pancha Sakha' given to five major Bhakti poets, was a convenient one, and suggested not so much their association with each other, as their association with Sri Chaitanya (1486-1533), the great Vaishnav saint, who spent about 18 years of his later life at Puri (1515-1533) during the reign of Prataparudra Dev. Differently 'Sakha' (*Sakha*) is also interpreted as 'Sakha' *Sakha*, that is, branches, and reference is being made to five different sects (*Sampradaya*) that these major poets founded and headed. The poets were Balaram Das, Jagannath Das and Achyutananda Das, about whom we have already noted, and Jasobanta Das and Ananta Das or Sisu Ananta, all of whom, except Jagannath, were non-Brahmins, and all distinguished themselves as great religious teachers, established their religious headquarters (*matha*) at Puri and outside Puri, and took disciples from all sections of the society, an expression in a way of contemporary socio-religious ferment, and partly a challenge to contemporary Brahamanic domination. Poetry for them was not a matter of faith, but a matter of necessity - a very handy instrument of communication, the emphasis being elsewhere, on the content, in their deep moral and spiritual faith,

with which they desired to enlighten and energies their readers.

Apart from the epical works noted earlier, that is, *Jagamohan Ramayana, Srimad Bhagbat* and *Harivansa,* they are credited with a large number of other books, shorter and more specific, related to Sri Jagannath, Sri Krushna as well as to Gita, Samhitas and Yoga etc. They aimed at expounding core areas of philosophy and religion, that is, such areas that were prevalent at the time, and were largely motivated towards socio-religious cohesiveness. Many of their works are yet unpublished, though in popular estimation such works are usually counted as being the work of the concerned authors. What is given below is a select list of such works, and it can be noted how these authors were eager to establish as far as possible a good rapport with the public.

(ii)

Many of Balaram's works dealt with Yogic processes and disciplines to be adopted with a view to obtain *Brahma Jnana*, that is, divine knowledge, and generally reflected the philosophy of Orissan Vaishnavism - a good mixture of Bhakti with Jnana. The books and poems to be noted are - 1. *Gupta Gita* or *Brahma Gita* (Secret Gita), that deals with *Brahma Jnana*, a mix of prose and poetry; 2. *Vedantasara Gupta Gita* (Essence of Vedanta), that deals with *Brahma Jnana*; 3. *Amara Kosa Gita* (Immortal Container Gita) and 4. *Virata Gita* (Vast Gita), both of which also deal with *Brahma Jnana*; 5. *Diptisara Gita* (Essence of Enlightenment), unpublished; 6. *Manu Gita* (Desirable Gita), related to Siddha sect, unpublished; 7. *Gita* (Translation of Bhagabat Gita), very popular; 8 *Bhava Samudra* (Sea of Faith), deals with general devotion to God; 9. *Bata Abakasha* (The Leisurely Hours at the Banyan Tree), related to the miraculous powers of Sri Jagannath; 10. *Brahmanda Bhugol* (The Geography of the Universe), deals with *Pinda Brahmanda* concept; 11. *Jnana Chudamoni* (About Knowledge), related to Yogic process, in the

form of question-answer, in prose, unpublished; 12. *Laxmi Purana* (Tale of Laxmi), a small Kavya, extremely popular, narrates how Goddess Laxmi could establish her position vis-a-vis her consort, Sri Jagannath; 13. *Mruguni Stuti* (The Prayers of the Deer), a popular song, in simple language, based on an episode of the Bhagabat, comparable to Jagannath Das's poem of the same title; 14. *Malasri* (Malasri), short poems of Prayer, to Goddess Durga, a mix of Sakta dharma with Vaishnavite ideas - a good example how Orissa's Viashnavism remained mixed with Sakta dharma, in the frame of *Sada Chakra* and Yogic processes; 15. *Beddha Parikrama* (Rounding the God's Enclosure), short poem, related to the visits to different deities inside the temple enclosure of Sri Jagannath at Puri; 16. *Kanta Koili* (To Husband, Koili), koili poem addressed to *Koili* (Cuckoo) - Sita's song of sorrow when she was taken away by Ravana, quite popular; 17. *Kamal Lochana Chautisa,* a Chautisa poem, in the line of *Kalasa Chautisa,* in rhyming couplets, detailing the life of Sri Krushna and his activities in a devotional submission; 18. *Bhajan,* poems of prayer, mostly addressed to Sri Jagannath, well-known popular poems.

Jagannath Das, in addition to *Srimad Bhagabat,* also wrote many other books, though none could surpass the popularity and standing of *Bhagabat.* Many of these books, like Balaram's, are not authentically edited, and some are yet to be published, Recently, a book entitled *Jagannath Dasanka Rachanavali* (The Works of Jagannath Das) containing some select poems of Jagannath, and edited by B.Sarangi and K.B.Mohanty, has been published by Orissa Sahitya Akademi (2000). Jagannath's books are - 1. *Saivagama Bhagabat* (Saiva Bhagabat), in 32 chapters in 'Nabakshyari brutta', where the story of Bhagabat is given in the form of dialogue between Hara (Mahadev) and Parvati, unpublished; 2. *Sola Chaupadi* (Sixteen Chaupadis), songs written in simple language in different *ragas*, related to the knowledge about *Brahma Jnana* and Vaishnavite practices, unpublished; 3.

Sri Nama Chandrika (The Glory of the Name), in 'Nabakshyari brutta', in the form of dialogue between Uddhab and Sri Krushna, giving an account of the glory of the God's name, along with references to *Jantra, Mantra, Sada Chakra, Astanga Yoga Sadhana* etc.; 4. *Anamaya Kundali* (The Nameless Circle), in 'Nabakshyari brutta', about eternal *Rasa*, in the frame of the references to one's own body, along with reference to Sri Chaitanya at Puri; 5. *Bhugolo Ekadasa Skanda* (The Geography of the 11th Skanda), the content analysis of *Bhagabat's* 11th Skanda, 6. *Brahma Gita* (Brahma Gita), related to *Brahma Jnana*, in prose and verse; 7. *Gupta Gita* (Secret Gita), provides knowledge about body and the matters of devotion, short piece; 8. *Daru Brahma Gita* (The Gita of the God's Wooden Image), relates to the situation after Krushna's death, and details about Nilachala (Puri); 9. *Panchabhuta Gita* (The Gita of Five Vital Elements), short poem, relates to the five elements such as earth, water, heat, air and space, with reference to Purusottam and *Pinda Brahmanda Bada*; 10. *Chhadarasa Bhagabat* (Bhagabat in Six Flavour), in question-answer form between Arjuna and God (*Bhagaban*), with an aim to find out who can be true devotee, and how devotion is to be shown to God, and the importance of God's name; 11. *Tula Vina* (To Spin Cotton), prose commentary on factors relating to Yoga, references to 'spinning' the body like spinning cotton, mix of spiritualism with *Pinda Brahmanda* concept; 12. *Nitya Niladri Vilas* (Daily Rituals at Niladri), gives glorious account of Niladri (Puri) and the Vaishnavite ways to come close to Great God Sri Jagannath, unpublished; 13. *Artha Koili* (Explaining Koili), spiritual commentary on *Kesaba Koili* of Markanda Das, a mix of *bhakti* (devotion) with Yogic philosophy; 14. *Mruguni Stuti* (The Prayer of the She-Deer), prayer to God to come to rescue at the time of calamity; 15. *Pahanti Abakasa* (Morning Song), a song asking Sri Krushna to get up in the morning and meet people who have come to see him; 16. *Phulatola* (Picking Flowers), plucking varieties of flowers in the garden with a view

to adorn Krushna with the same; 17. *Sri Gundicha Bije* (The Gundicha Procession), relates to the procession at the time of Car Festival, and 18. *Hati Jhulain Re* (The Elephant Swings), both devotional pieces with reference to Sri Jagannath; and 19. *Usha Harana* (Abducting Usha), a Kavya.

Achyutananda Das is said to have lived for more than 100 years (120 years), and is credited to have composed, in addition to *Harivansa,* a very large number of books (Samhita, Gita, Malika, Rahas, Bhajan, Janana etc.) that are extremely popular all over Orissa's countryside, though many of them have remained unpublished so far. Only recently, the Achyutananda Smruti Sansad, an organization devoted to propagate Achyutananda's excellence and glory, have published a number of his books, including a number of his short poems, such as bhajanas, jananas and chautisas etc., in multiple volumes (7 so far) edited by a team of editors, headed by Ratnakar Chaini. Some relatively more important books are - 1. *Sunnya Samhita* (Sunnya Samhita), relates to *Brahma Jnana*, and knowledge about *Sunnya* (Emptiness) as also knowledge about the body, and also includes references to Sri Chaitanya and Jasobanta; 2. *Charikhani* or *Sabda Brahma Samhita* (Four Segments or Word-Brahma Samhita), provides an account of word as linked to *Brahma Jnana*; 3. *Anakar Samhita* (Formless Samhita), speaks of the glory of God's name and its significance and importance; 4. *Abada Samhita* (Unrestricted Samhita), relates to open meditation; 5. *Jyoti Samhita* (Radiance Samhita), relates to the mystery of God's radiance; 6. *Nitya Rahas* (Perpetual Rahas), relates to the continuous association with God, in the form of Gopi's association with Sri Krushna; 7. *Gurubhakti Gita* (Devotion to Guru), refers to the Guru and the disciple relationship, and to ethics of living, and also references to Achyutananda's own place, and to *Rasa Lila*, 8. *Sunnya Gita* (Sunnya Gita), a poetic and conceptual discussion about *Sunnyabad* and true Guru; 9. *Manibandha Gita* (The Wristband Gita), relates

to the poet's present birth, also to the past births, and also how time (*Kala*) destroys all, with references to the Eternal Place (*Nityasthali*); 10. *Sabada* (The Word), refers to *Sunnya* knowledge and *Sunnya Purusha*, and also how men are circumscribed by their sense-organs, though surrounded by good instincts; 11. *Adi Brahma Gita* (The Primal Brahma Gita), points out to the time before Creation, and how the Creation began; 12. *Asta Gujjari* (Eight Gujjaris), quite popular, songs in the Bhakti tradition, points to eight levels of consciousness; 13. *Chaurasi Jantra* (Eighty-Four Jantra), provides details about Jantras, expounds divine knowledge - *Brahma Jnana*; 15. *Sisu Veda* (Sisu Veda), about *Nirvana*, *Sunnya* and the love between Radha and Krushna, and also about the devotional processes of Panchasakha; 16. *Gopalanka Ogala* (The Songs of the Cowherds), a long work, in 20 parts, relates to mysteries of cowherds and cowherdesses and also about *Mantra*, *Jantra*, and *Brahma Danda* etc..

Jasobanta Das is said to have been born around 1470, in a Kshyatriya family in the village Adang Niali, about 70 kms from Cuttack city towards the east. He is said to have lived for about 80 years and the same place 'Adanga' came to be reputed as his place of activity and meditation. One of his disciples, Sudarsan Das, wrote his biography entitled *Chaurasi Ajna* (Eighty Four Orders) which narrates how he rose from extremely adverse situations, and through divine contact with Sri Jagannath, came to be established as one of the great Gurus of the time. Jasobanta did not write as prolifically as Achyuta or Jagannath or Balaram did. Recently (1998) Gaurang Charan Roy, has edited most of the works of Jasobanda together in a book entitled *Panchasakha Jasobanta Rachanavali* (The Works of Panchasakha Jasobanta). The works are - 1. *Atma Parache Gita* (Self-Knowledge Gita), in five chapters, in the form of conversational dialogue between Arjuna and Sri Krushna ('Jagannath'/'Bhagaban'), refers to religious initiation received from Sri Jagannath as Guru, provides knowledge related

to *Jnana*, *nitya kshetra* (perpetual place of action), *nitya rasa* (perpetual Rasa), *Astanga Yoga* and over and above everything else, the great grace of Guru that brings *Brahma Jnana* - an intense exploratory account how religious transcendence can be achieved; 2. *Shivasworodaya*, based on the Sanskrit original of the same name with many changes, in the form of Shiva's answer to Parvati's questions, in 476 couplets, relates to the movement of *swora* or wind, through innumerable nerves of the body, and their implications - individual, social and spiritual, depending on their placement, position and movement, with a view to promote goodness and health as well a life of meditation and spiritualism made possible through a system of Yogic discipline of the wind; 3. *Govinda Chandra* (Govinda Chandra), a story-poem, in 2184 lines, depicts how Govinda Chandra, the King of Banga Desa, renounced his kingship etc., to become a Yogi, along with references to the Guru's importance, and how best mind and the wind inside the body can be disciplined through Yoga and *sada chakra* austerities - an important document of Natha Yogis; 4. *Banabhoji Boli* (Tale of a Picnic in the Forest), a moderately long story-poem, in about 500 lines, refers to an association of the cowherdesses of Gopa who sell curd with the Brahmin women of Mathura, and their joint devotion for Krushna, a poem depicting strong sentiments of Bhakti, and how that is an essential element to attain divine perception; 5. *Dibydeha Boli* (Tale of Illuminated Body), a poem of about 200 lines, relates to deep sentiments of Bhakti, and like the earlier *Banabhoji* puts emphasis on Bhakti Bhava, and maintains Bhakti as the best way of attaining divine perception; 6. *Rahi Damodara Katha* (The tale of Rahi Damodara, the divine being; 7. *Premabhakti Brahma Gita* (Love-Bhakti Brahma Gita) in verse, in 5 chapters, in 'nabakshyari brutta', provides an account of Orissan Vaishnavism, of both *Jnana Bhakti* and *Prema Bhakti*, and a synthesis of both, with a twist towards the later, and 8. *Jantraboli* (The Tale of Jantra), in verse, in 284

lines, in the form of conversation between Jasobanta and his disciple Loi, relates how *Brahma Jnana* is essentially *Nama Brahma Jnana*, that is, it is dependent on the Names (*Nama*) of the God and the related dimensions, as also accounts of the exponents of Vaishnavism in Orissa, such as, Ananta, Achyuta, Jagannath and Jasobanta etc.

Shisu Ananta (Das) was born in the last decade of the 15th century, at Balipatna, near Bhubaneswar, and died sometime in the second half of the 16th century. His early life was spent in adversity, but he succeeded to establish a sect for himself, called 'Shisu Sampradaya', and in course of time came to be counted as one of the outstanding ascetics and Guru of the times, at par with other Panchasakhas. His chief disciple, Siddha Baranga, provides some biographical details about him, in his book *Brahma Kundali*. In addition, all Ananta's works have been recently edited and published by Tamasarani Das Mahapatra, entitled *Shisu Ananta Srusti Sampad* (The Creative Wealth of Shisu Ananta, 2006) with the help of Achyutananda Smruti Sansad; and separately, she has also written a critical book on Shisu Ananta, entitled *Shisu Ananta Das*. Some select books, relatively more important ones of Shisu Ananta are - 1. *Hetu Udaya Bhagabat* (Wisdom-Awakening Bhagabat), relates to *Brahma Jnana*, *Pinda Brahmanda Bada*, glory of the Name, glory of the Guru and devotion to Guru, as also union of the individual soul with the absolute - an important document of Vaishnav austerities; 2. *Gupta Tika* or *Jantra Tika* (Secret Commentary or Jantra Commentary), relates to secrets of creation, from empty space *(mahasunnya)* to *Onkara*, and the mysterious activities of being and absolute being inside one's body, as also on the Yogic system pursued by the Panchasakhas, and the concentration at *Sunnya (Sunnya Samadhi)*; 3. *Brahma Parthiba Tatwasara Gita* (Gita of Brahma Earthly Essence), in 6 chapters and 133 couplets, in the form of Sri Hari as the speaker and Arjuna listener, refers to the origin of four Vedas and the glory and the

touch of divinity they provide, as also the austerities through body to realize the secrets of the body and the soul, and how to reach the final point where the individual soul meets the Eternal-soul - provides a good account of Ananta's own philosophy; 4. *Twatapurna Gita* (Gita of Concepts and Knowledge), in two chapters, in the form of conversation (Question-Answer) between the Guru and the disciple, relates to the creation of animated beings after the Deluge leading to such creation inside the human body.; 5. *Sabda Brahma* of *Suprakash* (Well Expressed), relates to the poet's own life, his parents, place of birth, activities and austerities, and final realization of divinity through Bhakti and devotion; 6. *Sansar Tatwabodh Gita* (Knowledge about the World), in five chapters, refers to the process of creation, as also the soul's progression from the mother's womb through the social world to a point after death, and identification of Sri Krushna with Sri Jagannath, and the importance of truth in all matters; 7. *Jnana Lahari* (The Waves of Jnana), in question-answer form, direct influence of Natha Sampradaya practices, the questions relate to illusion (*maya*) and creation of existence etc., and to necessary answers, that move over to Yoga and the relevance of Guru (*Yogajnana*); 8. *Shisu Mantra Bichar* (Considerations of Shisu's Mantras), relates to the glories of God's Name - 16 Names and 32 Letters, definition of the Primordial and about *Mahamantra*; 9. *Artha Tareni* (Meaningful Discourses), in 30 chapters, relates to religious rituals, process of devotion, and dimension of the soul, in both prose and poetry; 10. *Udebakhar* (Udebakhar), an important *Malika*, comparable to *Hetu Udaya Bhagabat.*

(*iii*)

It may be noted how the Bhakti poets, the so called 'Panchasakhas', were creatively prolific, and how they elaborated and elucidated religious and philosophical faith relevant to their times, and also highly significant in consideration of one's own

process and stipulation of living. It would be pertinent in this connection, to consider in some detail some of the more important books written by them. Such books would be, *Brahmanda Bhugol* by Balaram Das, *Darubrahma Gita* by Jagannath Das, *Charikhani,* and *Sunnya Samhita* by Achyutananda Das, *Govind Chandra* and *Premabhakti Brahma Gita* by Jasobanta Das, and *Hetu Udaya Bhagabat* by Shisu Ananta.

Brahmanda Bhugol is an important work that elucidates the physical and metaphysical disciplines. Balaram believed in acquiring knowledge (*Jnana*). But this was not something that was outside one's own being, such as expounding one's own knowledge to the world, or putting up varieties of dresses as a show, or moving from one pilgrim-centre to another to publicly exhibit one's own devotion, or observing hundred and one rituals day and night. The real path of wisdom is interned inside, in one's own being. The real truth in this world is to be aware of the Absolute Being, who is beyond all virtues, and stays at the top of three pinnacles (*trikuta*), and reveals itself in an enlightened body, like fire in ash, or like reflection of the body in water, or like the reflection of the face in a mirror ("As a room in darkness / Gets lighted when a lamp is lit / My words are like that, Oh Arjuna/ Reveals my form in *Trikuta*/.... Like fire in ash/ Like body in water/ Like face in a mirror/ ...The face of *Brahma* like that, Oh Arjuna"). That awareness is real wisdom. To acquire that, Balaram maintained, is to be knowledgeable about the body-system, which is organized in the discipline of Six Circles (*Sada Chakra*) and through the control of breathing This has reference to Balaram's own *Jagamohan Ramayana* where Laxman instructs Ramachandra in the tenets of *Jnanayoga*, where he points out that it is possible for a man to move to the other world along with his body only when he goes through the discipline of *Jnanayoga*. The Nothingness or Emptiness (*Sunnya*) resides within Nothingness. It is like the brightness of a mirror, or like the flame of fire, and it

should be the duty of every devotee or worshipper to know of the Absolute Being inside one's own body. Balaram speaks of it in quizzical terms - "Without form, nothing empty/ No sun no moon/ No oblations no *Jajna*/ The form without form/ Still, static/ Without beginning, absolute/ Always transparent". This way it is easy to know the Universe, thinks Balaram - "You know yourself, the body remains/ And once you know yourself you know the world". *Brahmanda Bhugol* elaborated three important trends of 16th century Oriya Bhakti poetry, that is, the ways of *Jnana*, *Yoga* and *Bhakti*. In Balaram we get a synthesis of all three, and it has been pointed out that though *Jnana* and *Yoga* are important, *Bhakti* is equally important, probably more so (Balaram's own *Bhava Samudra* is a good example), and so too, an awareness of one's own body's organization and a perception of the presence of Absolute Being inside the body. That is, whatever may be the type and whoever may be the devotee, the most important factor is his internal and integral purity.

Daru Brahma Gita, in 3 chapters, has a number of aspects. First it has the frame of a narration-poem, that is, events and situations have been narrated in a sequence with references to the Mahabharat, particularly Sarala's *Mahabharat.* Secondly, it deals with miraculous accounts touched with a sense of divinity - a mix of legend with reality. Thirdly, it is an exalted exposition of the glories of the divine being, a tone of awe and wonder - a strong devotional trend. Lastly, the accounts equate Sri Krushna with Sri Jagannath, an important attitude of Orissan Vaishnavism, exhibited repeatedly in Orissan Bhakti poetry. The frame refers to in the first phase, to Krushna's death, and subsequent association of the Pandava brothers who tried to burn mortal body but could not do so, and consigned it to the sea. In the second phase, what dominates is a miraculous account, away from reality, where Krushna's body was transformed into a log of wood (*Daru*) that floated into the sea-beach at Puri ('Nilagiri'). What happened subsequently brings

back again an aura of reality - the divine Daru was spotted by a forest-man ('Sabar') who picked it up and worshipped it in his forest-home, till it was found out by the King who brought it to his place, where the 'divine Daru' transformed itself into four figures (*Chaturdha Murty*) and thus began the worship of Sri Jagannath and all his rituals in the temple at Puri. It may be noted how the whole account is a genesis of Sri Jagannath worship at Puri, and how a great centre of prayer and devotion was established - a focal point for strongly motivated Vaishnav poets. That is the significance of *Daru Brahma Gita.* It does not, like other books of Bhakti poets, deal with *Jnanayoga*, or the details of *Jnanayoga* or the disciplines of Yogic meditation, but with an equally important area, that is, *Bhakti* or devotion, and particularly a subject the poets prize most, that is, equating Sri Jagannath with Sri Krushna, and talking of both in highest terms of divinity. Thus, initially, the hesitation of the Pandavas to consign Krushna's body to flames as he was beyond mortal considerations :

> He is Narayana without beginning
> And without end,
> How could we put him to flames.
> Fire cannot burn him
> No wind can sweep him away
> No sword can cut him
> No heat can boil him,
> He is unspoken, Absolute Being,
> He is everywhere, in all the worlds.

And again in their submission, the same sense of awe :

> He has no colour no spots
> He gives greatest pleasure greatest holiness,
> His body flames like fire
> He is primordial, Absolute,
> Narayana without beginning and end

Similarly, when Basu, the Sabar, sees the divine log of wood

floating on the sea his realization is beyond human terms :

It glows like fire without smoke
Shines more than million suns
More beautiful than million Gods of Love
The final, ultimate being.

Chari Khani or differently known as *Sabda Brahma Samhita,* is a small book of verse like *Brahmanda Bhugol,* and is divided into 4 units, in 163 lines. It is written in the guise of Mind-Consciousness (*Mana Chaitanya*) narration, and goes to analyse how body, knowledge, wisdom and austere practices all exist for the mind and for the mind's sake. The man can never get his deliverance or final release unless the mind grasps the true significance of all that. The poet further maintains that the mind rests on the body, and reversely the body also rests on the mind, and unless both are put into discipline and austere practices the man cannot get his deliverance (*mokshya*). That is the first and most important step in what Achyuta believed as the protection of the body and the discipline of the mind. He says that the mind in body is like the fragrance in the flower, like molasses in sugarcane, like ghee in milk, or like salt in sea, and wisdom resides in the mind. It is a mysterious network, he maintains, about which man has scant knowledge, and to be guided through that mystery he needs the help of a teacher (*Guru*). And the teacher or the Guru is the real pathfinder for the devotee - that is the next important step, finding and getting guided by the Guru. The power of his advice helps man to break through the covering of illusions, and like the glaze manifested in the mirror, it penetrates into the mysteries of the body. The end is a final realization, the final deliverance as the greatest end of all knowledge. This is the greatest happiness, the poet maintains, the greatest treasure one can have, and once the devotee gets a taste of this, he forgets everything else. "This is such a state," says Kabir, "Where there is no sound, no taste, no glamour, neither the illusions created by father, mother and other

relatives, nor there are any birds, beasts or gods and goddesses. It does not admit any caste or community distinction. There is nothing sacred or unholy." In fact, *Chari Khani* shows Achyuta as mostly a devotee given to the ways of *Jnana*. At the same time he admits *Bhakti* and the crucial role of Guru as the important elements in one's deliberations. The aim is to reach that point where body is sublimated in a metaphysical entity and where *Hansa*, the symbol of life, meets *Paramahansa*, the Absolute Being, which differently the poet describes as *nirvana*, *jyoti* (flame), *nisabda ghara* (silent house), *mahasukha* (great happiness) and *paramananda* (great enlightenment). At the end the poet equals all that with Sri Jagannath who provides the fruition of all understanding and all devotion - "Clear form that resides in Nilagiri/ On the north bank of salty sea/ In the Golden Throne near the Banyan Tree/ And manifests all virtues all knowledge./...Four bodies in great decoration/ No beginning, static, great flame/ ....Endless glory, sea of compassion/ All comprehensive..." (4th Segment).

Sunnya Samhita is in 29 chapters and 2880 couplets and in question-answer form. Achyutananda answering questions put by his disciples. The main thrust of the argument is towards explaining the concept of *Sunnya*, which is visualized, first of all, as highly incomprehensible, the finest point of consciousness, almost like a radiant luminosity shining in deep space, and secondly, inside the body (*pinda*) as the prime point of concentration, where *pinda* is seen as *brahmanda* (The Universe) and the *Sunnya* emerges as the primordial source of all creations and created activities. That is, *Sunnya* is that radiant roundness that lies over and above the 21 universes inside a man's body. Thus beginning with Yogic disciplines and austerities, and going through the devotion of the formless being, the devotee finally rises to comprehend an aura of emptiness. In Yogic system that is the point of mega emptiness (*maha Sunnya*) inside the thousand petals of the lotus. As the devotee reaches that through meditation he can visualize the eternal

union (*maha nitya rasa*) of the twin figures of Radha and Krushna. As can be noted, that is the point of final realization for Orissa's Vaishnavas where both *Jnana* and *Bhakti* have mingled together to concretize at consciousness and awareness. That is the final point of release (*mukti*), and that is *Sunnya Purusha* or Sunnya Figure, the poet maintains, visualized only through deep meditation and equally deep concentration. In fact, the poet views *Sunnya* or *Sunnya Purusha* at two levels, first, as a radiant luminosity beyond space, time and comprehension; and secondly, across the network of senses of the body as the central point from where the body's frame of life is manifested. Thus a man's body is the frame of *Sunnya*, and the world is manifested as *Sunnya*. *Sunnya Purusha* sees everybody, nobody can see him, he is expressed everywhere, but he is formless - the body is *Sunnya*, the world is *Sunnya*, the man emerges from *Sunnya*, he also returns to *Sunnya*, The belief distantly echoes the similar expressions of Buddhist Sunuyavada. But that is how Achyutananda and his companions viewed the formless Supreme Being (*Paramatma*), and also at the same time, could realize him in form :

> Be static on immobility :
> Concentrate on *Sunnya Purusha*,
> See the divine form in emptiness
> The formless body and formless form.
> The formless manifests as four deities
> The lotus blooms in the midst of pollens,
> Shape without form
> Shape without attachment.
> The lion would be seen in the east
> Lotus will bloom with God inside,
> Meditate on *Sunnya*
> Meet the unattached Form. (9th Chapter)

That is the main thrust of *Sunnya Samhita*. But differently it has also other dimensions. It deals in detail about Acyutananda's own

life, his life's situations and events, as well as about his companions, particularly about Sri Chaitanya and the Panchasakhas. Then he gives an account of many Sidhas who had their residences and places of worship on both the banks of the river Prachi. There are also references to contemporary social and cultural situations and to King Prataprudra Dev. Then he speaks of Sri Jagannath and Jagannath-worship at Puri, Radha-Krushna Lila, and about *nitya* or eternal *Rasa* of Radha-Krushna and of Vaishnav faith, of the glories and importance of God's name (*Namavada*) and how it regulates and sustains life and devotion, and about *Guruvada*, that is, what constitutes the Guru and the Guru's immense importance. *Sunnya Samhita* is an extremely interesting work and co-ordinates many faiths and activities pursued in Achyutananda's times.

Govind Chandra is different from earlier books in the sense that it is a book of narration that has a story, characters and sequence of events. But otherwise there is a good deal of similarity. Whereas earlier works analyse and expound how man's sublimation towards a finer spirituality is a necessity, *Govind Chandra* shows how that can be achieved at a functional level. The story is about Govind Chandra, the King of Banga Desha, who was a good king and lived luxuriously initially with wealth and power. But subsequently, at the persuasion of his mother, who warned him of the temporariness of life and advised him to achieve immortal happiness by becoming a Yogi, he renounced temporal life, took Hadippa, a sweeper, as the Guru, and took to ascetic ways of living, and never deviated from that. At the end, he got what he strove for, the great happiness of a 'released' soul. In the beginning this world is referred to as of lies and illusions. The relationship between life and body is like that between lightening and wind. The poet says - "As water drops emerge from rain/ And float where no trace to be found/ Similarly, see this body is/ You can only live for four ages if you can win over the time." Thus to save the body is the Yogi's main endeavour. He should have such a Guru who

can sanctify his body, and it is only through the Guru's blessing that he can be released eternally from the coils of death-"That Hadippa who serves the toilet/ Go and serve at his feet/ If he feels pleased at you, Oh my son/ You will be saved eternally from the coils of death." *Govind Chandra* provides two dimensions, one towards Yoga, and the other towards enjoyment (*bhoga*), and Govind Chandra, who lived in *bhoga* in the first phase of his life, deep in the worldly enjoyment as a king, could move away from all that in the next phase of his life, win over man's six cardinal passions, such as sex-passion, anger, greed, infatuation, vanity and envy, and could become a 'fulfilled' man, a Yogi. But the process of transformation is an extremely difficult one, the poet maintains, for which the Yogic practices, particularly the control of wind (*pabana*), a must. This can be done by going through the discipline of *sada chakra* (six circles), closing the *dasa dwara* (ten doors) of the body and pushing the wind upward towards the circle located in the 'Thousand petal lotus'. This is also called locating 'mindlessness' (*amana*) in the mind that makes the mind strong. And once the mind acquires strength, the cardinal passions get subdued :

Control the wind through ten doors
Breathe in and move the wind as you like,
Get into the temple of mindlessness
Make the mind strong,
Oh, son, it's difficult to practice Yoga. (11. 210, 211)

Govind Chandra, in 1045 lines, is mainly a story in verse, where the distinctive line has been drawn between *Yoga* and *bhoga*, and where the characters are grouped accordingly, and their statements and actions are also accordingly adjusted. Mainly written for the village-folk, for edification of their lives, and in a language which they can easily grasp and understand, its thematic complication outlined in the conflict between two philosophical concepts, with its emphasis on the discipline of Yoga, and sung in an apparently

doleful and melancholic tone outlying the sacrifices of the King Govind Chandra by Natha Yogis or mendicants, who move in the villages begging for food (and also enjoying a good deal of respect with the common-folk, even till the other day.) *Govind Chandra* continues to be a popular work among people in Orissan countryside.

Premabhakti Brahma Gita is a good document of Orissan Vaishnavism and its significance lies in an elaboration of the same. To realize *premabhakti*, that is, love wedded to *bhakti*, in a frame of *Brahmajnana*, that is, divine wisdom, has been a long-standing practice of the devotees in the line. Their system through *premabhakti* is completely internal, that is, it looks at oneself, at one's consciousness with total concentration, having nothing to come from outside elements. To listen, to worship, or to sing etc., that are essentially outside activities, like veneer, do not carry much importance with them. This system has been pursued by the famous 'five companions' as well as by many other devotees of the time. *Premabhakti Brahma Gita* shows that, and also that *premabhakti* is implied in *Brahmajnana* and remains as its essence. The first chapter refers to God, the supreme divine being, and maintains that he is created by none, he is self-created, he is the beginning and without beginning, and because of his desire to create, the creation began from vast and deep space, which ended in the creation of two figures, the first male (*Adi Purusha*) and the first female (*Adi Prakruti*). In the subsequent chapters the poet comes over to Radha-Krushna dimension, points out how they came to be manifested in our body, and how an awareness of their eternal immortal union ('Radha Krushna Lila') at the pinnacle point of our body is a real awareness of divinity which a devotee can have. Thus at the eternal place (*nityasthali*) the union of *Jiba* (Radha) and *Parama* (Krushna) continues eternally, and over that is *anakshyara* (wordless), then *nirakara* (shapeless), then *mahasunnya* (deep space) out of which the divine name oozes and

all creation is created. It is both a complicated and a simple awareness. It requires the complete concentration of the devotee and his complete oneness to understand the real essence of *nitya lila* or *nitya rasa* at the *nitya sthali*. There are seven coverings, the poet points out, related to 'Gopis' (cowherdesses), 'Gopas' (Cowherds), and 'Dhenu' (Cows) etc., on the one hand, and Sidhas, Gandharvas, gods including Vasudev, Vishnu etc. on the other, which the devotee has to unfold and bypass one by one to reach at that secret, eternal place, where in the form of Radha-Krushna God continues his dalliance (*Lila*). That is the final awareness of any devotee - the essence of *premabhakti* proclaimed by Orissan Vaishnavism. At the end, as in other similar Vaishnav accounts, here too, the whole nation is equated with Sri Jagannath and the glories of his place ('Nilachala Kshetra'), which is rated as the best of all :

> See this everlasting Blue Hill ('Nilachala')
> The best of all places of pilgrimage ('Tirtha'),
> Gopa, Mathura, Brundavana and Dwaraka
> All places are here, and also Kasi,
> Millions of Tirthas, all here,
> No end to its songs of glories. (V, 11. 192-195.)

Hetu Udaya Bhagabat, in verse, and in 10 chapters, combines several aspects related to *Brahamajnana*, *Pinda Brahmandavada*, *Guruvada*, *Namavada* as well as about the union of *Jiba* and *Parama* etc. It is not only a well-known work of Shisu Ananta, but a fairly well-known and respected work in the total trends of Vaishnavism in Orissa and is organized in the frame of a conversation between *Hetu* (Wisdom) and *Mana* (Mind). It begins with a hymn to Guru - "I worship at the feet of Guru/ He is the Deliverer of souls/ He destroys darkness/ He is Brahma/He is the primordial power", and goes on giving an account of Guru's glories and Guru's advice :

> Sri Guru speaks sweetly
> Oh good soul, listen to me.

Remember Govinda in time

Remember Time pursues you,

Stay peacefully, truthfully

Don't put you neck in the Time's noose. (I).

The second chapter also continues to speak of Guru's glories. He is without any form (*nirakar*). He is Vaishnav. He is *Parambrahma*, whatever he says and advises, is secret, invaluable.

Thus he keeps his hand on the body of the disciple, and speaks to him of the secrets of *Jantra* and *Mantra*, and as initiates him into the faith, it becomes a complete exposition of the glories of Orissan Vaishnavism, from *Jnana* to *Jnana* mixed *Bhakti*, and to *Bhakti* alone. The poet speaks of the act of Creation, elaborates its many steps, brings in such virtues as *sattwa, raja* and *tama,* equates them with such nerve-systems in a man's body, as *Ida, Pingala* and *Sisumna*, and maintains that at the end, all that has to be seen, assessed and perceived in a man's body-system - "This is the consideration of Brahma Sunnya/ View your own body/ Perceive the inside/ Every thing is mirrored there" Then the poet elaborates on what is *Pinda Brahmanda* system, and concludes that real understanding of that by the devotee is a true understanding of the mysteries of the Creation. Then the other thing remains, that is, to what extent the initiated devotee can discipline his mind with the help of his *Hetu*, that is, with the help of wisdom and *Jnana* acquired, and to what extent he can rise to view the union of *Jiba* with *Parama*, otherwise known as Radha and Krushna, the female and male figures. Because that alone will initiate final happiness and deliverance. Thus this is how the poet speaks of mind (*mana*) that alone can see the enlightened point :

The mind is your own Guru

It is Vasudev by itself,

It is like a rogue elephant

And it threatens three worlds,

Listen, O Son, *Hetu* is the spear

That can tame this elephant.
Unless the mind is disciplined
O Son, none can perform the Yoga.   (II)

(*iv*)

In addition to the above, the 16th century Bhakti poets also wrote innumerable short poems, almost like lyrics, expressing personal desires, attachments and submissions to divine beings on the one hand and perceptions about divinity on the other - ranging from prayer to meditation, with a good deal of structural flexibility, depending upon the occasions and individuals. First of all, such poems are in the nature of direct prayer, prayer to gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon. They are written invariably in a worshipful mood, praising great powers of the god or the goddess as well as the great grace of divine beauty. The devotee often expresses his obeisance and submission, and hopes to attain a purity of mind and salvation of spirit through his devotion. Yet, in this apparently simple structure there are variations, and the emotions range from simple joy and happiness at the thought of the God, to the feelings of pride and dignity because of the God's intransigence. The gods and the goddesses thus worshipped have their many local names as well as such names as Rama, Krushna and Jagannath. Sri Jagannath particularly, being the national-deity of the Oriyas, has evoked a large nun ber of powerful poems and songs. Balaram Das composed many poems of devotion, including *Devi Malasri,* a short, musical piece as a prayer to Goddess Durga, highlighting the Goddess's preference for colour, particularly red colour. :

Oh, Mother
Red are your weapons, clothes
Red your lips and eyes
Nails and face
The red vermilion on your forehead
And red dye on your feet.

Elsewhere, he speaks of Sri Jagannath in agony, as the Lord does not attend to his sorrows, as in the poem *Dina Bandhab He* (oh, the Friend of the Poor) :

Oh, you, the friend of the poor
My sorrows do not end,
If you forget me so, being such a friend
Who else will befriend me ?

Then the mood changes and it becomes worshipful :

He is the poor's friend, the great Mendicant
He destroys the sorrows of Yogis
And brings happiness to the poor,
Oh, save me, Round-Eyed,
I drown.
Save me from the sea of life.

Still elsewhere, he views comically the plight of the Lord, when he is taken out of his temple to be installed in the Chariot (*Ratha*) waiting outside, on the occasion of the Car Festival, and asks uncomfortable questions :

Oh, lady, look, look at the Lord
See how quizzically the Master smiles....
They have caught hold of his arms tightly
Hasn't he anybody to help him ?
Oh, friend, is the Master a debtor of the world
So people capture him for that ?
An hour still for the night to be over
Oh, friend, has he stolen somebody's wife ?
(*Sakhi Chahan Go,* Look, Oh, Lady).

Jagannath Das interspersed prayers to Sri Jagannath in many places of *Bhagabat,* almost always marvelling at the immense powers of the Lord, and the unique protection he offers to his devotees. Thus a piece entitled *Namaste Prabhu Jagannath* ('I bow to Thee Lord Jagannath') runs as follows :

I bow to Thee, O Lord Jagannath

The protector of people who have no protection,
I bow to Thee, O Lord Vasudeva
The friend to all devotees,
I bow to Thee O Lord Hrusikesha
The confidant of all who believe in you,
I bow to Thee, O Lord of the Universe
You are in all hearts,
You create all the worlds
Again you swallow them all...
You are the Brahma, Rudra, Vishnu
There is no other salvation
Except in you.

Jagannath Das also, like Balaram, puts in a comic attitude towards the Lord, though again like Balaram's, it has a worshipful bearing. The poem is entitled *Hati Jhulai Re* (Oh, the Elephant Swings), and the occasion is when the Lord is taken out of his sanctum to have an annual bathing (*Snana*) Outside :

Oh, the Elephant swings as it moves
Look, how the Elephant sweats excitedly.
The Elephant was tied to the Blue Cave
Now it's freed for it's bathing,.....
How graceful it looks, how rougish
The Elephant is the Lord of fourteen worlds.

In Achyutananda, on the other hand, there is a touch of pride, as if the poet is hurt at the Lord's intransigence :

Isn't there going to be any good, O Lord,
Though you are so merciful with me !
Is it your desire that
Even if I worship your lotus-feet
I would be destroyed !
Oh, you love your devotees so well,
But if your slave gets killed
Why should people worship you !

Tell me,

Why should they call you Madhusudan.

But Jasobanta Das shows a completely worshipful mood. Seeing the Lord at the end of the day, when the evening Puja is on, he submits his complete adoration :

At the end of the day,
At the beginning of the night
See the Lord from Jagamohan,
The face brightly dark
The lips shining with colour,
One look, and O, all sins vanish.
The lamps are lit, the torches glow
The smell of incense and camphor fills the air,
And the face, like the moon -
Beautiful, captivating.

In fact, in spite of variations and tension which implicit emotions provide, these poems of prayer are characterized by a sense of strong devotion and submission to the respective gods and goddesses, and they uphold the invisible yet intense link between the devotee and his God in a worshipful mood and in a mental condition of joy and happiness.

The second trend is different in approach and motivation. The poets are not much interested in the particular god or goddess and hence what is lacking is a worshipful mood that grows along with specific worships and rituals. The approach is one of meditation, meditating on that which cannot be easily comprehended and yet to be comprehended to establish the link between the devotee and the divine being, and to foster a condition of complete joy and tranquillity. We have noted the former group as *janana* or prayers to the Lord. The present group may be called *bhajana,* apparently to chant the Lord's name, but basically, to meditate upon that subtle divine concept that almost passes understanding. Thus the occasion is not to pray to any particular

god or goddess. The occasion is an experience of an undefined power, which the poets have variously called as *Brahma* or *Sunnya.* Such poems of prayer have symbolic suggestions, and also in symbolic language related to life, mind, life's growth, mind's growth, and to death and how best death can be avoided in a spiritual expansion, and in structures that have elements of thought and intellect. The emotion is controlled by thought, and the poet's main spiritual experience is expressed through a structure of arguments, and through images related to the body, and different parts of the body. What the poet finds in the confines of the human body is only a step to move further, to a point where the body does not exist, and even beyond, to situations where nothing exists, and finally to an awareness where even 'nothingness' does not exist. All the major sixteenth century Bhakti poets we have noted, particularly Achyutananda, Jasobanta and Sisu Ananta all wrote a number of these *bhajanas.* This trend continued also in the subsequent centuries, in such poets as Arta Das in the 18th and Bahuda and Bhima Bhoi in the 19th etc. For example, some poems may be noted, such as *Asunnya Hoina, Baimana Re, Baimana Ho, Bohu Bala Abala Re* and *Jyoti Pare Dibyajyoti* etc. by Achyutananda; *Thula Sunnya Nahin Jara, Gai Bhula Bhulai Lo, Dutigo Jiba Hansaku Dekhi, Bada Mayabi Jiba, Mana Matta Duanla Gai* and *Padichhi Bandha* etc. by Jasobanta; and *Are Baibara, Ahe Dase, Abana Akshyara Japa, Sunnyaru Sanchari* and *Hata Bhangiba Ho* etc. by Sisu Ananta.

Achyutananda's poem *Asunnya Hoina* (Be in Asunnya) is an apt example of this complex spiritual experience. The poem begins with a reference to *asunnya* which can be defined as 'negative emptiness', that is, where even 'emptiness' (*sunnya*) does not exist,

A place was there
It was Asunnya,
Strange to say

Then Sunnya was formed,
And inside the Sunnya
Existed the Formless, (*nirakar*),
And from the body of the Formless
Grew the image of Absolute Being, (*Parama Brahma)*
And from the Absolute Being
Quivered the sound,
And the sound awoke
Along with four arts...

It is a progression of experience to concrete details. But finally the experience goes back from where it began :

The wind turned
Blew upstream,
And the spirit moved
Back to the shining orb (*jyoti mandala)*
Back to the white mark
Where the attention was fixed.
As the wind was merged
The Sunnya was revealed,
As the Sunnya was formed
The Asunnya awoke.

Thus it may be how the experience goes through ladders. First, it is a spiritual perception - "And inside The Sunnya/ Existed the Formless/ And from the body of the Formless/ Grew The image of Absolute Being." Secondly, it is an attempt to organize the perception through arguments and inferences - "And from the Absolute Being/ Quivered the sound/ And the sound awoke/ Along with four arts...", and finally beyond physical and spiritual the perception moves to elemental levels - "A place was there/ It was Asunnya/ Strange to say/ Then Sunnya was formed/ ....As the mind was merged/ The Sunnya was revealed/ As the Sunnya was formed/ The Asunnya awoke."

The habit of linking spiritual experiences with thought and

intellect can also be seen in another poem of Achyutananda, entitled *Baimana Re* (Oh, My Crazy Mind). The poem has a number of incongruous and apparently opposite elements :

The new-moon night has the moon with sixteen parts,
And the moon rises every night,
The lamp burns day and night
And the forty-nine winds kindle the lamp.

Or,

The swan swims in the stream's gorge
The deer resides in fathomless water
The four clouds joined and poured incessantly
Yet the crops dried up in complete drought.

Apparently these are opposed to each other, that is, the new-moon night and the moon, the stormy wind and the burning lamp, as also rain and drought cannot exist together. Therefore to see them together is an absurd idea. But this is only one way of looking at the situation. There is another way, and whatever appears to us as incongruous, in fact get joined up at a deeper level and the poem's orientation is to move from incongruous and incompatible towards a realization of congruity and compatibility. Thus the poet's initial advice:

Oh my crazy mind
Spell whatever cannot be spelt

has been transformed into a higher and deeper spiritual understanding,

The temple has risen in emptiness
The temple stands on water -
What a temple the sculptor has carved ?
It has no doors,
Yet you can see the Lord.

Achyutananda was one of the greatest exponents of what we may note as a mix of spiritualism with arguments, moving towards elemental experiences. But Achyutananda was motivated

by inherent motivations of Bhakti literature. Therefore it was not in Achyutananda alone, but also in his companions, Jasobanta and Ananta, we can also note similar perception. Jasobanta's poem, for example, *Thula Sunnya Nahin* (No Fixed Emptiness) has developed over a number of negative points :

He hasn't any fixed emptiness
He shines in nameless (*anama*)
He hasn't any leg or hand
He exists in undefined,
He has no body
He lives in bodilessness,
He is not worshipped
He never does any work
He has no habit
He is invisible.

This is one level, one may define it as a 'physical' condition, which is expressed in the apparent meaning of word and sound, and in a way confined to that meaning. But differently with respect to implicit suggestiveness this is not just a negative formulation. This is a complex spiritual awareness that has no body or shape, not in portions, and which cannot be expressed in language. Hence, the awareness is one of affirmation, and the spiritual elements end in a subtle mystic perception - "He shines in nameless"....... "He is fixed and shapeless".... "No movement/ Neither wind's nor sun's nor moon's"... "It is not spoken/ It is unspoken, innumerable" etc.

A similar perception can be noted in Sisu Ananta too. For example, in a poem such as *Abana Akshyara Japa* (Meditate on the Unspelt Word) mystic feelings have been expressed not through any relative complications of emotion, but through the discipline of Yogic exercises :

The lips and teeth shouldn't move
The throat and head shouldn't shiver
No rituals, no hymns, no worship

And perceive the absolute being...

And at the supreme stage of experience the perception of Ultimate Beauty is not something fleeting, it is real and seen through the symbols of Radha and Krushna :

Look at the lotus of thousand petals
It is Kanha, the son of Nanda,
On his left is the daughter of King Bhanu
And she glitters like lightening....

The perception continues in other poems too, as in *Are Baibara* (Oh, You Crazy Hero) :

Oh, my crazy hero
Meditate on the eternal *(niranjana)*
In the lotus of your heart.
See how he plays over all gods
Shapeless but gives shelter to all,
Wish for the temple without mind (*amana mandira)*
Spell the unspelt (*abana)*
Get released.

and finally,

The lotus blooms without stem
See, how it remains upturned
See the seed, arrange the petals...
See, how he resides on the pollens,
He, who holds the flute,
All smile, glowing face
And holds Radha, his half, in lap,
In pretence, in disguise.

We have noted Bhakti poems (both *bhajana* and *janana*) in two categories - *saguṇa* and *nirguna,* that is, those where gods and goddesses are viewed physically, and worshipped severally, and those else, where not worship, but meditation is the prime factor, and the devotee meditates on a formless and shapeless being who pervades everything everywhere, Particularly to visualize the

universe inside ones own body, to imagine thirty three crores of gods and goddesses residing in the body, and to elucidate and elaborate all that, has been remarkably done by the Bhakti poets. In the Charya poems the factors about the body have been expressed through such symbols as 'Sabari' or Sabari-woman, 'tree', 'boat' etc. In Bhakti poetry such symbols are, *bohu* (daughter-in-law), 'tiger', 'snake', 'cow', 'boat', *hata* (market), *dhinki* (the pestle-rod), 'crocodile', 'rat', and 'frog' etc. The places they refer to are also couched with symbolic meanings such as *Alekha Patana* (Nameless Place), *Gola Hata* (Round Market), *Abana Mandala* (Unspelt Circle), *Kaunri Mandala* (Magical Circle), *Anama Patana* (Unnamed Place), *Bhramara Gumpha* (the Bumble Bee's Cave) and *Banku Nala* (Curved Stream) etc. A pertinent poem in this connection is Achyutananda's *Yeh Mana Sina* (This Mind Only). It reads :

> Don't dig wells and ponds
> Don't set up temples or groves
> Don't instal gods
> Don't go to Vrundavan, Gopa or Prayag,
> You fool -
> Don't read scriptures
> Don't put up decorations
> Don't count beads
> Don't grow matted hair
> Don't put ashes on your body
> Don't use loin-clothes,
> You fool -
> See soul in the soul
> See yourself in your body
> See how it shines and glows
> Remember, you fool,
> That is your deliverance, your happiness.

It would be interesting to note briefly the many formal categories into which the Bhakti poets in the 16th century and even afterwords, as a habit arranged their writings. These categories no longer exist, neither they are pursued any more by the poets, except that they have historical importance and to be appreciated that way. But at the time, they were quite specific and the poets were quite eloquent in sticking to one form or the other, or even to a number of forms at the same time, and the reading and the listening public also approved poetic exercises. Though each of these forms had their specific organizations by way of verbal and thematic arrangements, yet what is to be noted at the same time is that, they have similar orientations and motivations, and a great deal of similarity, almost to the point of oneness, in attitude, understanding and point of view - as a whole, providing different formal strands to the major trends of Bhakti literature. Some of these categories may be listed as follows :

1. *Mahatmya :* mostly accounts of glories of places, festivals, months, and gods and goddesses (example, *Purusottam Mahatmya, Ekadasi Mahatmya, Kartik Mahatmya* etc.);
2. *Ogala :* These are in the form of question-answer session by opposite parties, and subjects may vary from simple, social habits to difficult mystic knowledge (example, Achyutananda's *Ogalas* to be sung by cowherds at the time of Holi festivals) :
3. *Jantra (Yantra) :* These are mostly esoteric designs, followed by Sanskrit *mantras* and spiritual explanations in Oriya, the purpose being to explain difficult spiritual factors (example, Achyutananda's *Chaurasi Jantra,* and elaborate accounts of spiritual factors, mainly related to the body, along with 84 designs);
4. *Patala :* The term is used in the sense of chapters, such as *Dasa* (10) *Patala, Chabis* (24) *Patala, Chhyalis* (46) *Patala,*

mostly related to *Brahma Jnana* and spiritual factors as well as explaining matters related to future, and hence related to *Malika;*

5. *Sabda :* called *Sabda* and *Sakhi,* mostly used by Achyutananda in explaining factors about *Sunnya*, comparable to *Sabda* used by Kabir and Nanak;
6. *Gujjari :* written in *raga* and rhyming pattern in sections, to be sung, related mostly to Radha and Krushna and their love (example, Achyutananda's *Asta Gujjari* and *Naba Gujjari,* in 8 or 9 musical sections);
7. *Boli :* mainly long poetical pieces, in simple language, describe an event or occasion, meant for singing, (example, Jasobanta's *Banabhoji Boli,* descriptive account of a picnic, related to Gopis);
8. *Basanta-Hori-Churchari :* songs of spring, related to Radha-Krushna themes - love, union etc., sung at the time of Dola or *Hori* (Holi) festival, have affinity with such songs in Brajaboli and ancient Hindi;
9. *Rasa :* folk-performances in songs, enacted at spring and autumn times, related to Radha-Krushna Lila and union, quite popular in the countryside, often composed by all Bhakti poets, mainly of three categories - *Basanta* (spring) *Rasa*, *Sarada* (autumn) *Rasa* and *Nitya* (perpetual) *Rasa* (example, Achyutananda's *Nitya Rasa* and Jagannath's *Sarada Rasa*)
10. *Kirtan :* in songs mostly sung by a team, with the accompaniment of drum and cymbal sound - related to the sweetness of Radha-Krushna Leela, specially termed as 'Odissi Kirtan' to distinguish it from that of Bengal ('Nadiya Kirtan') - an ancient system of songs used earlier for singing songs of *Gita Govind* - often sung in the countryside in the evenings;
11. *Abakasha :* songs sung in the morning at the break of the

day, praising the glories of the God's name, otherwise known as *Pahanti Abakasha* (Dawn Songs), written to various rhymes in devotional mood, often sung in Vishnu temples in the mornings, also composed referring to Radha and Krushna (example, Achyutananda's *Nishi Abakasha,* referring Radha's waking up in the morning);

12. *Mangala Arati :* hymn like songs, sung in adoration of the deity, in the mornings, in accompaniment of musical instruments along with the ritual of waving lamps in front of the deity by way of showing devotion;
13. *Janana :* extremely popular form, shows the devotee's submissions in adoration of the deity - all Bhakti poets resorted to this form;
14. *Nirguna Bhajan :* these are generally meditations on the divine being in contrast to *Janana* that are devotional songs for particular deities, composed to communicate deeper factors of life and *Brahmajnana* and *Pindabrahmanda Vada* etc., (also known as *Olata* or reverse *bhajan*), frequently composed by Bhakti poets, mystic in nature and combine reverse elements;
15. *Malasri :* the *bhajanas* and *jananas* composed in ancient musical raga 'Malasri', almost always in devotional mood (example, Balaram Das's *Devi Malasri*);
16. *Kabacha :* belongs to the same category as *Jantra, Mantra, Tantra*, equally motivated to provide protection to the devotee in adverse conditions (example, Balaram Das's *Kabacha);*
17. *Gita :* traditional Sanskrit form, frequently used by Bhakti poets, in *nabakshyari brutta* to suit Oriya readers, elaborate religious and philosophical ideas such as related to creation, the divine union between the *Jiva* with *Parama* and *Pindabrahmanda Vada* etc. - typical Orissan religious and philosophical concepts, (example - Balaram's *Vedantasara*

Gupta Gita, Jasobanta's *Premabhakti Brahma Gita*);

18. *Samhita :* adopts traditional Sanskrit form, like *Gita*, a frequently used form by the Bhakti poets, main purpose to publicize Vaishnav religious ideas, elaboration of one or more than one religious concepts, frequently used by Achyutananda (example, Achyutananda's *Sunnya Samhita, Anakar Samhita);*

19. *Malika :* sayings for the future and for things to come, along with references by implication to socio-historical conditions of the time, and devotional submissions to Sri Jagannath, written in simple language for village-folk, the purpose being to induce hope and faith, Achyutananda most reputed for *malika* (example, Achyutananda's *Joganta Gita, Garuda Gita* etc., Jasobanta's *Malika,* Sisu Ananta's *Udebakhar*).



6

KAVYA LITERATURE

(*i*)

A very important aspect of ancient and medieval. Oriya literature could be seen in innumerable Kavyas, that is, long narrative and descriptive poems, that were written by several poets, beginning from mid-16th till about the mid-19th century, in a period of about 300 years. The period, as we have already noted, was subject to frequent administrative changes and political uncertainties. This began with the death of Prataprudra Dev (1538), took a violent turn in 1568, when Orissa lost its independence, and continued thereafter, first through Afghan-Moghul occupation of Orissa (1568-1751), then Marahatta rule (1751-1803) and through British administration (from 1803), till we come to the end of the 19th century, and the advent of modern period. It was a trying time as a whole, but somehow the basic structure of Orissan life, that mostly lay in the structure of villages, allied by innumerable small kings and chieftains, continued with a good deal of elasticity as well as endurance and tolerance, and provided necessary fertilizing ground and support to the growth of literature. This was almost always in poetry and it had many dimensions. Kavya literature was one of largest and quite popular.

It had three viable sources, one was ancient epics particularly the Mahabharat and the Ramayana, two fine models in the language being conveniently available were by Sarala and Balaram, as also a number of Puranas that were circulating in the countryside in a number of translations (Nilambar Das, Haladhar Das, Pitambar Das, Gopal Telenga etc.). The next was the Bhagabat, a fine translation of which could be had in Jagannath Das's *Bhagabat*. But by the way, the largest source was, what may be termed as

imagination, the poet's own imaginary formulations of a story, with its own concomitant developments, invariably in the contemporary social frame, and largly motivated towards love. Some of these took from legends and folk-tales and also from tales about Sri Jagannath. But predominantly they had a frame in imagination and meant to touch the imagination of readers away from any religious belief or any of the traditional moorings in the epics or the Puranas or the Bhagabat, particularly in such tales as related to Rama or Krushna.

The number of Kavyas written during the period, as traced by the scholars, would be around seventy. The following is a select list of relatively more important and more well-known ones arranged century-wise - Sixteenth Century : 1. *Laxmi Purana* (Laxmi Purana) by Balaram Das, about the affairs of Sri Jagannath and Goddess Laxmi; 2. *Rama Bibha(*The Marriage of Sri Ram) and 3. *Kalpalata* (The Creepers of Imagination), the story of love between a prince and a princess by Arjun Das; 4. *Rukmini Bibha* (The Marriage of Rukmini), about the marriage of Rukmini to Sri Krushna, and 5, *Nabanuraga* (New Emotions), about the early life of Sri Krushna by Kartik Das; 6. *Taaupoi Katha* (The Story of Taapoi), about a young girl's tribulations, by Gopinath Das; 7. *Gopi Chandan* (Gopi's Sandal-Paste), about the dalliances of Sri Krushna and Gopis by Chanda Das; 8. *Rahasya Manjari* (The Buds of Mystery), about the love-association of Radha and Krushna by Debadurlav Das; 9. *Parimala (*Parimala), fictional love-story between a prince and a princess, and 10. *Gopa Kavya* (Gopa Kavya), description of *Rasa* of Krushna and Gopis, by Narasimha Sena; 11. *Sashisena* (Sashisena), fictional love-account of a prince and *a* princess by Pratap Roy; 12. *Chata Ichhabati* (Ichhabati and the Student), love-account between a princess and a prince in the guise of a student in a teacher's place; 13. *Ushavilas* (the Story of Usha), account of love between Usha and Anirudha, taken from mythology, by Shisu Sankar; and 14. *Premalochana*

(Premalochana), 15. Kalabati (Kalabati) and 16. *Lilabati* (Lilabati), all accounts of love, marriage, union etc. by Bishnu Das in ornate style. Seventeenth Century : 1. *Anangarekha* (Anangarekha), 2. *Madanmanjari* (Madanmanjari), 3. *Tripura Sundari* (Trirpura Sundari), 4. *Ichhabati* (Ichhabati), all fictional accounts of love and 5. *Raghunath Vilas* (Story of Raghunath) in imitation of the Ramayana, by Dhananjoy Bhanja, in ornate style; 6. *Sola Pala* (Sixteen Palas), 16 brief accounts in story form, of the glories of gods helping individuals in distress, sung as a part of folk religious ritual, written in a mix of Oriya and Bengali, by Kabi Karna; 7. *Kanchi Kaveri* (Kanchi Kaveri), based on a legend, account of how Lord Jagannath and Lord Balavadra rendered help to King Purusottam Dev of the Sun dynasty (1468-1497) in his invasion of Kanchi in the south, by Purusottama Das; 8. *Kapatapasa* (False Dice), sequences taken from the Mahabharat related to the Dice-Game episode, very musical and quite popular, by Bhima Dhibara; 9. *Nala Charita* (Story of Nala), based on Nala-Damayanti story taken from the Ramayana, by Madhusudan Das; 10. *Lilabati* (Lilabati), fictional love-account in ornate style, by Raghunath Raj Harichandan; 11. *Prema Panchamruta* (Mixed Honey of Love), of devotional mode, Vaishnav Kavya related to the love of Gopis, by Bhupati Pandit, a Brahmin from Western India, settled at Puri; 12. *Rasa Kallol* (The Waves of Rasa), related to Krushna Leela, and love-relationship of Radha and Krushna, a famous, popular work by Dinakrushna Das; 13. *Sarbanga Sundari* (All Beautiful), 14. *Chitrakala* (Chitrakala) and 15. *Rasakala* (Rasakala) by Lokanath Vidyadhara, in ornate style; and 16. *Sri Radha Vilas* (the Story of Sri Radha) by Dinabandhu Raj Harichandan. Eighteenth Century : 1. *Lavanyabati* (Lavanyabati), 2. *Prema Sudhanidhi* (The Sea of Love), both fictional accounts of love, separation, and union etc. of concerned princes and princesses, and 3. *Baidahisa Vilas* (The Story of Sita), related to the Ramayana, and 4. *Suvadra Parinaya* (The Marriage of Suvadra), from the

Mahabharat, by Upendra Bhanja; 5. *Sri Rama Lila* (The Activities of Sri Rama), related to the Ramayana, by Ananga Ñarendra; 6. *Bidagdha Chintamoni* (Chintamoni in Love's Pang), related to love accounts of Radha and Krishna; 7. *Prema Tarangini* (The Love's Stream), also related to the love of Radha and Krushna; 8. *Sulakshyana* (Sulakshyana) , from Mahabharat, love between Sulakshyana and Samba; 9. *Rasabati* and 10. *Premakala* (nee Rasakala), both fictional love accounts, by Avimanyu Samant Simhar; 11. *Rasasindhu Sulakshyana* (Sulakshyana, Sea of Rasa), fictional love-account by Kesab Raj Harichandan; 12. *Kanaklata* (Kanaklata), fictional love-account of royal people, by Tribikram Bhanja; 13. *Shasirekha* (Shasirekha), and 14. *Ichhabati* (Ichhabati), both fictional love-accounts by Padmanav Srichandan; 15. *Bichitra Ramayana* (Multi-Coloured Ramayana), musical pieces of Ramayana episodes, quite popular, by Biswanath Khuntia; 16. *Samara Taranga* (The Waves of War), account of war between the Marahatta soldiers and the Oriya Paikas (soldiers), and 17.*Ambika Vilas,* 18. *Gopi Vilas* and 19. *Shyama Rasochhaba,* all about Krushna's amorous activities with Radha and the Gopis, by Brajanath Badajena; 20. *Mathura Mangala* (Joys of Mathura), related to Krushna and Balaram's entry into Mathura by Bhaktacharan Das; 21. *Jugala Rasamruta Lahari* (The Waves of Rasa of Twin Figures), related to Radha-Krushna Leela by Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma; 22. *Dardhyata Bhakti* (Portraits of Devotion) contains 19 portraits of devotees, by Ram Das; 23. *Jasobanta Dasanka Chaurasi Ajna* (The 84 Prescriptions of Jasobanta Das), a life-sketch of the poet Jasobanta Das; and 24. *Rasa Ratnakar* (the Sea of Rasa) and 25. *Basanta Krida* (The Dalliances in the Spring) both about Krushna Leela, by Shyamsundar Bhanja. Nineteenth Century (Early Part) : 1.*Chandrakala* (Chandrakala), fictional account of love, by Kavisurya Baladev Rath; 2. *Prabandha Purnachandra* (The Account of the Full Moon), related to Krushna's marriage with

Rukmini, and 3. *Raghav Vilas* (The Story of Raghav), related to Sri Ram, by Jadumoni Mahapatra.

In fact the first-ever Oriya Kavyas were written by Sarala Das, and his two outstanding works *Sita Banabas* and *Chandi Purana,* though in both cases the sources were epic and mythology, yet had all the elements of fine Kavyas - logical sequence of story, strong human elements, necessary play of intense emotion, off and on descriptive accounts to supplement and support the flow of narration and bold motivation and point of view. Besides they were written in a language away from the massive frame of his *Mahabharat,* in a cordial and familiar environment, and achieved a complete rapport with the readers. No doubt Sarala Das was a trail-blazer. But the Bhakti poets who immediately followed him, though they wrote a large number of discourses on religion, philosophy and quality of devotion, did not write Kavyas as such, except a very few exceptions, because they had different motivations towards the society - social upliftment, and the individual's habits and manners of living, and spiritual compatibility and cohesiveness in broad areas of life. But the Kavya-writers per se, had different motivations, and the headlong movement of Kavya, beginning from mid-16th century onwards, brought in dimensions of joy, pleasure and entertainment, and promoted love for life. Thus love as a binding force between two persons has been the prime motivation in most of the Kavyas. It has been framed in love-stories taken from the mythologies, or from widely circulating Radha-Krushna relationship, or in purely imaginary accounts of the trials and tribulations of the lovers, who in almost all cases come from royal background. The exceptions are interesting, but they continue to be exceptions, and are located few and far between. Thus. for example. *Laxmi Purana* by Balaram Das, probably the first-ever Kavya after Sarala Das, had a frame in religion and dealt with intriguing relationship between Sri Jagannath and Goddess Laxmi; *Kanchi Kaveri* by Purusottama

Das that had also a religious motivation, dealt with King Purusottam's invasion of Kanchi and the physical help given to him by Sri Jagannath and Sri Balavadra; and *Samara Taranga* by Brajanath Badajena dealt with battles fought between two armies, the only battle-account, it may be noted, subsequent to such accounts in Sarala's *Chandi Purana.* Similarly there are accounts of worship and devotion as well as brief portraits of devotees in *Sola Pala* of Kabi Karna. and *Dardhyata Bhakti* of Ram Das respectively. Similarly too, the few books, such as, *Rama Bibha* by Arjun Das, probably the first-ever rhymed Kavya in Oriya, dealt with Rama's marriage and its aftermath, and *Sri Rama Leela* by Anang Narendra and *Bichitra Ramayana* by Biswanath Khuntia that depicted selective episodes from the Ramayana in immensely popular musical *ragas,* had greater interest in telling the story of Ramayana than on anything else. But by and large, looking at the 70 odd Oriya Kavyas, what the reader becomes deeply concerned is the dominance of love and its many trends, irrespective of whatever may be the source or frame - a far cry from what the whole body of Bhakti literature professed and achieved.

The Kavyas, as has been pointed out, were written in a period of about 300 years, from mid-16th to mid-19th, and the writers were not only separated in time, but also with respect to their habitations and localities, yet they exhibited strong commonness in their attitudes, motivations and in ways of reacting to the conditions of life, and almost invariably eager to establish rapport with the readers and listeners, whom they always aimed at providing entertainment and mental satisfaction. Thus they picked up stories and references from familiar factors and environment, and put emphasis on narration and description, as well as on such other aspects that would be within the ambits of the readers/ listeners perception. Such an aspect of the Kavyas may be noted in their 'musicality', that is, incorporating various modes and tunes of music, generally known as *ragas*, in the frame of the Kavyas.

They are many, and many of them have become obsolete now. But there is no doubt that most of them were quite popular when they were put to use, and they suggest a direction of ancient Oriya poetry which was quite palatable then but cannot be tasted as such now. At the same time, the social contact and cohesion suggested by them, in providing an easy, spontaneous rapport with the people, are no longer available to the present-day writers. It may be noted how the *ragas* originated from the beginning, that is, they can be traced way back, to the Charya songs. That is, they had such *ragas* as *Kamod, Dasakh, Pattamanjarji* and *Baladdi* etc. Even the epic writers used a system of metrical arrangement which was later called as 'Dandi brutta', and Jagannath Das wrote *Bhagabat* in his own special metrical arrangement which came to be known as 'Nabakshyari brutta' or 'Bhagabat Vani'. The Bhakti poets were not much interested in musical modes, as their purposes were different, mostly towards edification and improvement of human character and community living, and they stuck to simple metrical arrangements without any rhetorical flourishes so that the communication would be direct and specific. The first Kavya to use musical mode was *Rama Bibha* by Arjun Das (16th Century). He used different ragas for different *chhandas* (cantos) of his book, and as if, that was a call for action, and hardly a Kavya was written subsequently that did not use a group of *ragas* as was thought best. For about 300 years, looking at the Kavyas as a whole, it was an incredible situation - scores of *ragas* and a continuing environment of music that reverberated throughout the countryside of Orissa.

We can note some of the *ragas* as under - *Mangalgujjari, Baradi, Chokhi, Mallhara, Kalyan Ahari, Kedar, Kamodi, Malab, Basant, Sankaravarana, Kafi, Kalahansakedar, Mukhari, Madhukeri, Asadhasukla, Bangalasri, Pahadiakedar, Mukhabari, Lalit Kamodi, Ahari* etc., and a number of *Vanis* too, such as *Asadha Sukla, Chakrakeli, Kalasa, Alasi, Munibara, Lila Kaincha* etc.

Arjun Das had adopted a number of *ragas* for his book. The same practice was followed by almost everybody else who wrote afterwards. Thus for example, Narasimha Sena, contemporary of Arjun Das, in the 24 *chhandas* of his Kavya *Parimala* used a *raga* differently for each, such as *Malab*, *Dhanasri*, *Gujjari*, *Ramkeri*, *Desakshya*, *Baradi*, *Chokhi*, *Nalini Gauda*, *Kedar*, *Basant* etc. So too, with Bishnu Das, another contemporary in 7 *chhandas* of his book *Kalavati* used 7 different *ragas*, A few famous ancient Kavyas can be cited in this connection. They are, *Rasa Kallol* by Dinakrushna, *Lavanyabati and Baidehisa Vilas* by Upendra, *Bidagdha Chintamoni* by Avimanyu, and *Mathura Mangal* by Bhaktacharan. Apart from the subject matter these Kavyas profess and their excellent poetic qualities, their immense popularity in no small measure was due to a large number of well-known and popular *ragas* and their variations they used in their cantos. An interesting point to note is that even though the verbal structure of a piece is not easily or immediately understood, yet people widely go on singing the same piece just for its captivating music. The *chhandas* of Upendra Bhanja are cases in point. In fact the tradition of music in Orissa, of which *chhandas* form an important part, owes a good deal to the musical structure of the ancient Oriya Kavyas, which in their turn, also to a large extent, contribute to the Kavyas' popularity. Even a Kavya like *Samara Taranga,* that, has a completely different subject matter from the usual ones, has taken recourse to *ragas* in all its cantos. They are, *Rasakaila, Pahadia Kedar, Chakrakeli, Ahari, Asadha Sukla, Ghantaraba* and *Kedar Kamodi* etc.. Music, incorporated in the form of *ragas*, was integral to Oriya Kavya. It shaped its attitude, environment, and contributed largely to its richness.

A related aspect would be the poet's use of language, and the different styles the poets adopted in consonant with their subject matter and the topics under exposition. The total stretch of period during which the Kavyas were written was long, and it

is not expected that the progress or the drift of language would be same or static.Yet looking at the language structure of the Kavyas in general, we can note a few explicit groups. For example, as Sanskrit was a dominating language used by the kings' courts and the scholars, and in many cases the models were in Sanskrit, therefore the influence of Sanskrit was quite noticeable. But this had its grading. Some poets took to Sanskrit more closely than others. Upendra Bhanja was a good example. His two famous Kavyas *Lavanyabati* and *Baidehisa Vilas* had a good bearing in Sanskrit. But it was not that he adopted this style in every Kavya or every piece that he wrote. His Kavya *Prema Sudhaniḍhi* did not incline that much. towards Sanskrit, and his songs of love were largely free of Sanskrit influence. Then there were other eminent poets too, such as Dinakrushna *(Rasa Kallol)* and Abhimanyu *(Bidagdha Chintamoni)* who adopted more or less a middle course, that is, wedded Sanskrit with free, conversational Oriya speech, a type of free 'polite' language, which not only these two, but many others adopted, and which in a way, took the shape of a standard linguistic expression. Other good examples were *Rahasya Manjari, Parimala, Ushavilas, Premalochana* etc. in the 16th century; *Anangarekha, Lilabati, Prema Panchamruta* etc. in the 17th; and *Jugal Rasamruta Lahari* in the 18th. These constituted a different category, quite an important one, as against the former, and cut across time. Still, another category may also be noted. It shed off Sanskrit influence still further, and went even closer to conversational Oriya speech, and it too, cut across time. The play of creative imagination and poetic flourishes continued, but not to that extent when it would pose a barrier between the writer and the reader. The approach was direct, the emphasis was more on narration and story telling, the purpose being to convey content with clarity, in the line of, it may be said the poetic discourses of the Bhakti poets, but creatively better organized. The good examples are such Kavyas as *Laxmi Purarna, Rama*

Bibha, Rukmini Bibha, Chata Ichhabati and *Shasisena* etc. in the 16th century; *Sola Pala, Kanchi Kaveri, Kapatapasa, Nala Charita* in the 17th century and *Dardhyata Bhakti, Bichitra Ramayana, Samara Taranga* and *Mathura Mangala* etc. in the 18th century. There are occasional linguistic deviations in a few Kavyas, like a mix of Oriya and Bengali in *Sola Pala* and a mix of Oriya and Hindi Khoratha in *Samara Taranga*, but on the whole, the Kavyas in this category have a distinct emphasis on simplicity and on a desire to come closer to popular speech more than what may be noted in the two former categories.

A few examples suggestive of differing linguistic categories as mentioned above, though not adequate in translation, yet would be pertinent at this point The examples are from Upendra Bhanja, Dinakrushna and Bhakta Charan, three important representative poets. For example, in *Baidehisa Vilas*, the beginning of the first canto (written in the raga *Pahadia Kedar*) is a prayer. First of all it has a heavy concentration of Sanskrit-based words which need to be explained before they are understood. Secondly, the words, word-conjugations and the verbal arrangements can be interpreted in two ways, that is, one, a prayer directed to God Vishnu and the other, to God Surya, both inherent in the same linguistic form, and the same words suggesting alternative meanings. The result is a complicated form for the reader who may not be sufficiently knowledgeable. Similarly the rhetorical flourishes are frequent in Upendra Bhanja, which by themselves may be interesting, but are of academic type and not very congenial to the uninitiated reader. An example, from *Lavanyabati* 32nd canto, where the poet speaks of the rising of the moon -"It looks as if the dark body of the night is now covered with a white sandal-paste, or as if the milk-white sea mixes with the blue water of Jamuna, or as if to cool the white-heat of the sun the Supreme God has now filled the earth with camphor-dust, or as if Lord Mahadeva who carries the moon on his head has now washed the earth-house with white moonlight. The

moon like a snare of Cupid now catches the young hearts, and they who thought of drowning in water out of love-agony, are now afraid, since the moon who was born of water would also torture them there". These strains are less in Dinakrushna as his accounts, as in *Rasa Kallol,* are easily intelligible to the readers, since the words are invariably taken from his familiar environment, and sentences convey a closeness to his speech. Even literary flourishes that may be found in Dinakrushna's description of seasons, are few chosen ones, and again such references that the reader is usually familiar with, and can make sense easily. Thus speaking of the coming of summer season, the poet refers to a familiar situation with familiar examples. That is, when the summer comes, the poet points out, the rays of the sun become sharper, it appears as if fire burns everywhere, and when people walk on the hot ground (with naked feet) they walk painfully by moving their feet up and down quickly, like horses moving their feet in the battleground. On talking of the coming of rains, the poet speaks how dense, terrifying clouds cover the sky, how thunder roars continuously, how the tops of mountains are swallowed by clouds, and how all directions get lost in total darkness. In Bhakta Charan the approach towards a popular or conversational speech is still closer and literary flourishes are few and always a part of popular perception. This can be seen in almost all cantos of *Mathura Mangal*. An example, showing Jasoda's sorrows when Krushna left for Mathura - "Oh my Shyamaghana (dark as cloud), if you go, to Mathura / How would I live, looking at whose face / All my ten directions would be empty, life would be meaningless / I would be pining for you,Oh, my life's wealth, all days and nights / Like as a fish is without water, like as a country is without a king". In fact, as we noted, the range of linguistic levels in ancient Oriya poetry are many and they extend from compact,Sanskrit-influenced scholarly linguistic frames to easy, free, familiar movements of day-to-day speech. This depended on the equipment

of the poets, the occasions when the works were written, the readership in view, as well as on the wishes and desires of the patrons which most of the poets had to look for financial support, and the trends and traditions of literature that were available to them.

It has been pointed out how ancient Kavyas were mostly narrative in structure, that is, they mainly put emphasis on telling a story, with its sequences and logical developments, and whenever they did not borrow from mythology or from Rama or Krushna tales, they freely took recourse to fictional stories mostly related to love of princes and princesses. But description, wherever occasions came, also played a good part in the accounts. Not that it was integral. with the subject matter always, or developed a fine consciousness of nature - nature as a mind-set or essential part of mental attitudes as has been done by the modern poets or writers in the modern times. But it had its own strength, made people aware of their natural environment, and introduced an aura of relaxation in the continuous drift of narrative sequences. The nature's account in the Kavyas was mostly descriptive, that is, described this or that with reference to natural objects or situations or even nature's items such as animals, birds, trees, mountains, rivers etc. These descriptions varied from poet to poet, from objective accounts to such descriptions that show the poet's preferences, and even to such cases where the accounts have to some extent the frame of suggestiveness. But generally they have a straight, direct, lineal motivation, the purpose being to incorporate an element of expansiveness and dilation.

Even earlier, the epic writers, Sarala, Balaram, Jagannath and Achyuta, incorporated nature-references in many places of their epics and in other books. But in most cases nature was seen independent of the action described, in a relative frame, mostly as a background, in terms of animals and birds and their activities. Thus Sita in *Bichitra Ramayana* looked at animals and birds around

her and felt pleased. So too, in the Rusyasrunga story in *Jagamohan Ramayana*, the young women passing through the river in their boat, had a good diversion in looking at the animals and birds on the banks and contemplating on their activities. In Achyuta too, nature was nothing more than a brief background to the action described, as references to clouds and rains on the night Krushna was born. It was only in Jagannath we note some variation, where nature appears to have more significance than just a neutral background, for example, in the poet's account of the rainy season, the poet has tried to relate the rains with the man's socialness and moral character. Initially, it is the portrait of the rainy season - "The clouds met in the space/ Joined with thunder and lightening/ Spread from earth to sea to space/ The blue clouds all over the world." Then, related to rains man's moral character is suggested:

> As the fools speak low of the Vedas
> So the frogs croak at the coming of the rains.

Elsewhere too, in *Sarada Rasa*, in *Bhagabat* the beauty of nature is not limited within itself, it extends to the mind-set of the characters:

> Good autumn time
> The wind blew soft and pleasant,
> The moon rose in the sky
> The sky clear, captivating,
> The flowers bloomed in land and water
> Cool, fragrant, without parallel,
> The moon's circle was complete
> Gopinath saw it - felt happy, excited.

The Kavya writers did both, like as in Sarala or Balaram, they too viewed nature objectively, in a relatively independent frame. But that was only one aspect They too, as Jagannath did to some extent, related nature to the mind-set of the characters or to situational developments. In Debadurlav's *Rahasya Manjari*, nature provides the frame to the heroin's mental restlessness :

Fearsome summer the end of Baisakha
The hot wind blows and fearsome storm,
Mangoes and jack-fruit ripen, and water gets hot
My body burns, I can't stand erect,
Oh, I die, I die,
My lord has left me, what is my fault.

In Narasimha Sena's *Parimala* too, the poet is initially aware of the nature's separate identity - "The flowers bloom and fall/ *Malati* buds open/ Coloured bananas look colourful/ And *Kasa* flowers smile in whiteness." But elsewhere in *Gopa,* the poet has joined the natural aspects of the river Jamuna with the beauty and mind of the heroin - "The face like a blooming lotus and the eyes like blue-lotus/Arms like the lotus stems and thighs graceful sandy shore/ Breasts like *Chakrabak* and anklets sound like the noise of wild swans..". Similarly, in Bishnu Das's poetry, first, the objective identity of nature - the account of a moonlit night, interestingly comparable with such an account in Radhanath Roy's *Chilika* (later 19th). But it changes, as in his *Premalochana,* where the exciting beauty of nature is both a background and a springboard for further action, for both the hero and the heroin :

Then the night came and the moon rose,
Moonshine fell in drops through leaves
And the forest area showed in beauty as time passed,
Moonshine fell in pieces on the ground
Like crystals, scattered everywhere,
Like lotus blooming in Jamuna
And shadows of trees looking like dark water.
They kept their clothes away and loved each other under moonlight.
They spent the night in myriad artful ways.

The aspects of nature are best seen in Dinakrushna, and also to a large extent, in Upendra Bhanja. Particularly, the accounts of nature given in *Rasa Kallol,* in the description of seasons, are

among finest in the entire ancient Kavya-literature. They have all the trends we have discussed above, as well as in addition, complications of imagery, and structural complications related to the mind-set of the characters - a link which is both external and internal. A few examples would be apt. Thus this is how the poet describes the spring season - a direct account, though there is an implicit trend towards love and love-union :

> The time of flowers came
> The south-wind blew,
> The envoy of the God of Love (cuckoo) got restless
> And started singing in fine tunes,
> Lotus, blue-lotus, and *niali*, *ashok*, mango-flower
> All bloomed,
> Like five weapons of the God of Love,
> And got ready to attack people in love
> And to take away their five lives. (12th canto)

But slowly the poem's perception changes, and we move from an external assessment to an internal linking, where an awareness of nature becomes a part of one's own mental state, as in the 16th canto, where the rise of the rains, the love excitement of the hero, and the distress of the lover due to clouds, have joined together in a fine integrated account :

> Somebody looks at the clouds and says,
> Look, this elephant will not keep us at peace,
> It carries God of Love, cranes are its teeth,
> It moves menacingly and streams like a waterfall.
> Where should I hide myself,
> Where is the cave of my lady's breasts ?
> The rainbow twangs
> The killer-god most cruelly
> shoots hailstones as arrows.

In Upendra Bhanja too, first, a fascinating account of nature as such - the spring season - "The soft wind blows/ Stealing the grace

from the top of Malaya mountains/ I will take away your fragrance-/ Says the bumble-bee to the flower/And *nageswara* puffs with pollens/ And *ashok* flowers to decorate the trees." But the other awareness also comes, joining nature's situation with one's own mental condition :

Like water flowing in rains
Tears flow continuously from her lotus-eyes,
Like earth getting muddy in rains
Her cheeks get muddy again and again,
Like cuckoo in rains
The cuckoo-voiced lady is dumb,
She can't think, darkness surrounds her
And blooming *malati* flowers hit her
Like so many weapons of love.

One relevant dimension of ancient Oriya Kavyas lies in their many references to contemporary social habits and manners. It was a long stretch of about 300 years when the Kavyas were written, and normally the changes that come over are expected to be picked up by the writers. It has been done so, though at the same time, it may be pointed out, that social dimension on developing a social frame, though an important one, was not a major preoccupation with the Kavya writers. The political situation in Orissa, beginning from the 16th century onwards, went through rapid changes. But it was not so with social conditions, that more or less remained unchanged and one can always detect common strands throughout the period. A good early example, we have already referred to, was *Kalasa Chautisa*. Though not a Kavya, it mirrored many of the adverse social conditions of the time, such as, the evil custom of getting young girls married to old men, or the complete helplessness of women often bartered for petty gains. These factors have continued even afterwards, even till now, in Oriya society, and are often reflected in literary productions. Another good example was Balaram's Kavya *Laxmi Purana*

written about 100 years after *Kalasa.* It also highlights a woman's helplessness, how a woman is considered as an object to be disciplined, and how she has to cater to the whimsicalities of the males. But the new point which emerged which was not in *Kalasa,* was the woman's power, a strong sense of femininity, how a woman can establish herself in adverse situations. There are other aspects, such as related to high or low caste, or to the woes and poverty, as also in spite of everything, dependence of the male on the female, so also the compulsions of the marriage, and women's strong attachment to ornaments etc.. But the ancient writer's social awareness was not as strong or intense as one may find in his counterpart today. Yet it was being suggested in many ways, in small and large inferences, and the social-environment did form a part of the Kavyas to a large extent. Sixteenth century poet Banamali Das's *Chata Ichhabati* is a pertinent example. In simple language and simple narration it is the love-account of two young people, almost as if written in the contemporary times. Though the story relates to a young prince and a young princess, yet it has the environment of a commonplace village life, and has many familiar village situations. On the other hand, in spite of difficult and circuitous language Upendra Bhanja's Kavyas provide a similar taste. Though basically the stories of royal personages, in the line with other Kavyas they too suggest many factors of contemporary life in the villages, as well as rituals festivals and occasions of happiness and distress. The account of Sita's marriage in *Baidehisa Vilas* (canto 10) is a case in point, where Sita is prepared with dresses and ornaments etc. to be brought as a bride to the marriage-altar, that has an all too-familiar ring of such occasions, only with a little more touch of opulence because of Sita's royal context. Differently, Malini's character from *Lavanyabati* (canto 13), a flower-woman, and her habits, manners, bodily decorations etc. - in short, her total personality, shows a familiar village-character, the product of village conditions. Even, away from Upendra

Bhanja, in Purusottam Das's *Kanchi Kaveri* (17th century), a slightly different Kavya in the tradition of Oriya Kavya ouevres. The meeting of Manika, the cowherdess, with Lord Jagannath and Balavadra, reveals the vast expanse of Chilika's sands, and the nature of the villages of the cowherds nestled in between. The daily life, the details of small and big occasions, and the easy naturalness and joys and sorrows of Orissa's rural life and society, could be indicated from 300 years of Oriya Kavyas, and that constituted an important dimension of the same.

It may be noted how the Kavya writers, in giving an account of nature often connected that with the love-relationship between the hero and the heroin. But independent of nature-description, love has been a major experience in the Kavyas too, both long, narrative ones as well as the short ones. First of all, the themes of the Kavyas have been taken from the love-episodes of the epics and the Puranas. Such examples are *Rukmini Swayambar* (Kartik Das), *Usha Vilas* (Shisu Sankar) and *Shasisena* (Pratap Roy) etc. In these the motivations of love constitute a major aspect in the subject-matter. Secondly, even though the source has been from the Puranas, the emphasis has been usually on a specific subject-matter, such as, the relationship between Radha and Krushna, or Krushna's relationship with the Gopis, or in general, the love-related relationship of Krushna at Braja and Brundavan. Such Kavyas are, *Rahasya Manjari* (Devadurlav Das), *Rasa Kallol* (Dinakrushna), *Prema Panchamruta* (Bhupati Pandit), *Bidagdha Chintamoni* (Avimanyu) and *Mathura Mangal* (Bhakta Charan) etc. In these Kavyas the subject-matter is not related to love, love itself is the subject-matter, and from a physical and external level it has been extended to subtle points of perception. On the one hand, it has the frame of a story, that is, the sequences of incidents that happened in the early life of the hero Krushna, and related to that the elements of anxiety, eagerness and excitement. On the other hand, because of the hero Krushna, and connected to him,

are habits and manners as well as mental conditions, attitudes and motivations, such as happiness, pleasure, distress, dislike and affection etc. of the heroin or the heroines. Thirdly, beyond all that, many other Kavyas have been written, where the subject-matter is purely fictional, that is, not borrowed from any Purana or epic, and can be termed as 'secular', and yet has strong frame of love. Such Kavyas are, for example, *Parimala* (Narasimha Sena), *Chata Ichhabati* (Banamali Das), *Lavanyabati* and *Koti Brahmanda Sundari* (Upendra Bhanja), *Sarbangasundari* (Lokanath Bidyadhar), *Shasilekha* (Padmanav Srichandan) and *Chandrakala* (Kavisurya Baladev Rath) etc. Thus the experience of love, it may be said, continues to be the main trend in most of the Kavyas.

Structurally the love theme has two levels. First, it is direct, that is, it is expressed in the direct mutuality of the love-experience of the concerned hero and the heroin, along with their emotional variations such as joy, sorrow, agony etc., arising out of love, union and separation, or simply from anxiety and eagerness, in short, from a general restlessness of mind due to love. Secondly, it is indirect. The play is not in the mental level, but in the organization level That is, though apparently the relationship is one of love, it is not the love-relationship of any two persons anywhere. The mental situation that ensures love is not a common ordinary situation that we come across in modern times. On one count, it is the love account of 'class' and 'caste' people, the royal personages, the kings and the queens or the princes and the princesses, or people having high, royal connections. On another count, it even goes further, of human beings with a touch of 'divinity', 'mystery' and 'extraordinariness'. This is particularly so with Krushna-Kavyas, where what we come across in the relationship of the hero and the heroin, is like a metaphor or a symbol through which the intimacy and intensity of love is expressed. Taking recourse to the theme of love had its traditional moorings. It was educative also, persuading

people to be acquainted with literature and to exercise their minds and intelligence. But at the same time, it has such entertaining and relaxing dimension which probably the Kavya-writers wanted to achieve, as a substantial palliative to the difficult times through which the people as well as the writers themselves had to pass.

It would be interesting to note that among the Kavya-writers many were kings, who belonged to various kingdoms in Orissa. They wrote in traditional manner, adopted traditional categories, and mostly wrote in ornate style. Among them, Upendra Bhanja stood out as most distinctive. But strictly he was not a king, he belonged to the royal house of Ghumsar, in southern Orissa. Some of the kings were, in the 17th century -Dinabandhuraj Harichandan (Surangi, southern Orissa), Dhananjoy Bhanja (Ghumsar), Raghunathraj Harichandan (Banpur, near Chilika); in the 18th century Kesabraj Harichandan (Surangi), Tribikram Bhanja (Ghumsar), Shyamsundar Bhanja (Haladia, near Khurdha), Birakeshari Dev (Gajapati King, Khurdha), and Padmanav Srichandan (Banki, now. Cuttack district); and in early 19th - Somanath Jagdeb (Angul).

(ii)

At least two Kavyas, Balaram Das's *Laxmi Purana* and Purusottam Das's *Kanchi Kavery* dealt with subject-matter related to Sri Jagannath. The former is a small Kavya, a singular composition in the total ouevres of Balaram, and is extremely popular in Orissa's countryside even today, as a devotional-religious book which is sung by women on the occasion of Laxmi Puja, celebrated in the month of Margasira (November-December). The story related to a family-quarrel but assumed a serious social motivation, as Laxmi went out of the temple (at Puri) on her own, without the permission of her husband Sri Jagannath, to accept the Puja of a dalit woman outside. This Sri Jagannath and Sri Balavadra did not like, considered Laxmi as an upstart who had

lost her caste because of her association with a dalit family, and drove her out of the temple. This resulted in an impasse with both the brothers being put to extreme inconvenience, and the fiasco was resolved with they both reconciling with Laxmi, on her own terms. The quarrel is given in titillating terms :

Laxmi, the great lady, returned to the Lion's door,
Saw both the brothers sitting on the way, obstructing.
Said she, what's this, give way, there is work,
I will cook food,
Govind said are you mad Laxmi,
Why did you go to the Chandal's lane? ...
Now listen to my words, my dear,
There is no greater sinner in the world than you,
People call you crazy goddess
Though my wife you move around crazily,
You break down thousand houses to make one
You demolish one house to build thousand ones,
That is your greatness, Oh Laxmi,
Please go out, don't stay with me.

Laxmi Purana is not a devotional piece. It is replete with references to social systems and manners that are still valid in Oriya society, and establishes the feminine-power in no uncertain terms.

Kanchi Kavery is also popular, but in a different way - its story is popular. It has been taken up as a subject-matter, particularly in dramas, in the modern times. It was also taken up as the subject-matter for a Kavya in Bengali. The subject-matter was part legend and part history and relates how Lord Jagannath and Lord Balavadra assisted King Purusottam Dev (of Sun Synasty) in his attempts to defeat King of Kanchi in the South and win over his daughter Padmabati. It tells how both Sri Jagannath and Sri Balavadra took human forms, rode along on two horses, one black and the other white, as a part of the King's army, and on the way - an incident which is popularly marked, how they felt

hungry on Chilika sands and took food from a common cowherdess, called Manika. The Kavya has fine narrative sequences and particularly, the encounter of gods with a human being, narrated in normal humam terms, has been quite popular and popularly spoken about. The encounter is graphically described - "The woman shifted the pot of milk from her head/ Veiled her face and walked languidly /... Covered her mouth with her cloth and smiled demurely/ And looked at the faces of the riders eagerly.", as also the bargaining once the eating is over.

Manika said how is it you eat
And you don't have money.
I am a housewife I return home
Who is to give me my money.
The elder said please don't get angry
Take our rings please, keep them in mortgage.

Kanchi Kavery highlights pride - pride in one's own King and nation, pride in one's devotion, and pride that when occasion comes gods can be one with human beings. It has social motivations and political attitudes, and has artfully manoeuvered legend and history to provide a fascinating virtual reality.

The subject-matter related to the Ramayana or the Ramayana related narrations can be noted in three Kavyas, namely *Rama Bibha* by Arjun Das, *Bichitra Ramayana* by Biswanath Khuntia and *Sri Ramalila* by Anang Narendra. The first one deals with a part of Ramachandra's story related to his early chastisement of demons along with Biswamitra, and his marriage with Sita. But the second and the third briefly narrate the story of the Ramayana but with different approaches.The former deals it very selectively, episodically, with a good flight of imagination and with plenty of musical *ragas*, the purpose being to create an awareness and atmosphere about Ramayana through an environment of music, so that it can be remembered and sung. The latter has more utilitarian purpose, and being a good example of Rama Lilas

enacted in the countryside, it sticks closer to the general frame of the Ramayana, and tells the story directly and racily without much embellishment of imagination and music. Both *Bichitra Ramayana* and *Sri Rama Lila* have a base in folk-performance (in fact, both are popular in the countryside) and their poetic organizations are guided to a large extent by that consideration.

The story of *Rama Bibha* is also told racily, and in simple language, but not with a view towards folk-performance, but with a true Kavya-style, to be read and appreciated, with imagination and literary flourish, and is said to be the first Oriya Kavya with rhymed-metre and *ragas*. Thus, this is how the poet describes the anger of Parsurama and the fear he injected in Dasarath's army :

His lips trembled and eyes became red,
And he breathed rapidly
Like the winds of last conflagration.
As he rose the seven seas and islands trembled
And a great panic seized the court of Indra.
He rose up in great anger clanging his weapons
As if the earth's axle was uprooted
And thrown into the great ocean...
Then a great panic seized Dasarath's soldiers,
'He comes, he comes', they shouted,
And groups of jackals howled all around
And blood like rain streamed from the sky.
And all fled - chariots, elephants
Across the forests and mountains.....

Arjun Das and Biswanath belonged to Puri, and Anang Narendra to Bankoi in the Khurdha area. Allied to Ramayana was the Kavya *Nalacharita* by Madhusudan Das. It had no direct bearing with Ramayana, but was tangentially related to that in the sense that the original account of Nala and Damayanti's woes and sorrows was told by Rishi Markendaya to Ramachandra to assuage his feelings of sorrow in separation from Sita. The Kavya is in 7

cantos, told racily and in simple language, and in simple structure. It is a familiar story of great sorrow as well as of great courage and integrity, and the Kavya's purposes had been both to inculcate morals and provide entertainment.

Apart from the Ramayana, the Mahabharat and the Puranas also provided subject-matter to the ancient Kavyas. Thus *Kapatpasa* by Bhima Dhibar was based on the Mahabharat, related to the dice-game episode, and *Ushavilas* by Shisu Sankar, had its source in the Mahabharat, Harivansa and Bhagabat. *Kapatapasa,* to begin with was a very popular work, and a very musical one, as it incorporated a number of popular tunes and *ragas* in its structure. It was a small Kavya in 10 cantos, and mainly gave an account of Draupadi's insult in the Court of Duryodhana, after the defeat of Yudhisthira in the dice-game. The poet was a fisherman by caste, but what is more important is that, it was at a level different from the rhetorical Kavya-tradition of the time. It was written in a simple, colloquial language with..many realistic details, and with a strong flavour of naturalness. In details it conforms the original in Sarala, but the main purpose has been to highlight the basic nature of main characters with a view to moralizing and providing a lesson in reform of the evil and wrong doer. Thus, this is how the poet describes Draupadi's helplessness and fear when Dussasana barged into Pandava's palace and aggressively searched for Draupadi - "Draupadi was afraid/ Her body shivered in distress/ She got up quickly and ran away/ Her clothes dishevelled/ Her hair flew loosely / She was breathless and ran and hid herself in the Kitchen/ Eyes restless, she could not talk..." Dussasana could not get her, and as he was returning in surprise, he looked at the kitchen and was amazed :

> At the kitchen he knelt and looked around,
> Was it the sun in the east -
> Draupadi's body looked like that.
> Dussa was amazed, wondered what it was,

Was it the sun away from the sky

Or the moon hiding in fear of Rahu ?

The expression of emotion in *Kapadapasa* is both simple and intense, and coupled with music, it came to acquire a position of love and respect in the minds of the readers. *Ushavilas,* on the other hand, deviated from the main Mahabharat line, took up one of the stories included therein, the story of Usha and Anirudha, the daughter of Banasura, a devotee of Lord Siva and Krushna's grandson, and how they felt attracted towards each other, how Banasura severely objected to that, that resulted in serious discord between Banasura and Krushna, which finally ended in the union of two young persons. In style of writing too, both in its use of language and structure of the story, it *struck* a new ground in consonant with other Kavyas of the time, such as *Rahasyamanjari, Parimala* and *Premalochana* etc., in developing an ornate, rhetorical style that looked forward to such writers as Upendra Bhanja.

A number of Kavyas took their subject-matter from *Bhagabat* and *Harivansa,* but specifically dealt with the life and activities of Krushna, particularly at Gopa, then at Mahura, and also at Dwaraka, and also in some cases the activities at both Gopa and Mathura, and even of Gopa and Dwaraka have been mixed up. Krushna's activities in his early life at Gopa and Brundavan had an extremely important dimension related to the Gopis in general, and Radha in particular, and all that were in the lines of normal Vaishnavite ideas and perception. But Krushna's activities at Mathura and Dwaraka had different connotation as they conformed more to the story-element in a secular frame. Thus at Mathura, the emphasis has been on Krushna's entry into Mathura along with attendant incidents, and his encounter with Kansa. Similarly at Dwaraka, where we get a glimpse into Krushna's adult life, the emphasis has been on Krushna's relationship with Rukmini, the princess of Bidarva, and his final marriage to her.

All these Kavyas can be considered, in a way, as 'Krushna-Kavyas', that is, Kavyas related to the complex and varied life of Krushna, which on the one hand, was motivated by contemporary Vaishnav faith, and on the other, by a strong desire to develop as good a structure of narration as possible. The Kavyas were spread out across time, yet their common bond, that is, developing Krushna-theme, remained, and influenced their attitudes and points of view. The Kavyas were, to list relatively more important ones apart from *Rasa Kallol* and *Bidagdha Chintamoni,* which would be discussed later, *Rukmini Bibha, Gopi Chandan, Gopa Keli, Rahasya Manjari, Prema Panchamruta, Jugal Rasamruta Lahari* and *Mathura Mangala*

Gopi Chandan by Chanda Das and *Gopa Keli* by Narasimha Sena, both deal with Krushna's links with the Gopis and provide accounts of *Rasa* dance, the former at Dwaraka, at a slightly later stage, where Gopis from Brundavan have been brought in, and the latter in the context of Gopa at the appropriate time. Chanda Das refers to a sweet time in the evening when the moon has risen, and speaks of the excitement of the Gopis and their request to Krushna to arrange for the dance:

> The Gopis dressed Krushna as the chief dancer,
> And smiled and said - Oh, Lord,
> Please go under the Kadamba tree
> And take your flute of separation and play;
> Murari, the enemy of Mura said, Oh women of Gopa
> I play flute for your coming
> But when you are with me, Oh, dearest ladies,
> Why should 1. play on flute?
> Now the god whose rays are like nectar
> Rose in the sky,
> And the god of love fanned *malaya* wind slowly,
> And pollens dropped from flowers, cuckoos sang sweetly,
> He who understands every heart - Oh, Lord,

Started *rasa* dance in the garden and pleased everybody.

But in *Gopakeli*, probably the first Oriya Kavya to provide an account of *Rasa*, the context was Brundavan, that is both the time and the place were appropriate. First, the poet describes the beauty of the river Jamuna, then the beauty of Brundavan's forest on the bank of Jamuna, with continuous recourse to images, and also makes out comparisons related to the loves and beauty of youthful women. The account is given graphically, with a lot of literary flourish not found in *Gopi Chandan*, about how the women of Gopa responded to the play of Krushna's flute. Initially the river Jamuna :

Jamuna's water is fine, cool, delicate.
Like a separate area, beauty deep, grave.
As if the earth-woman has spread her tresses
And the flowers therein scattered in the streams...

Then the beauty of the forest :

Brundavan shines on the bank of Jamuna
Covered with trees, bushes, creepers - so fascinating.
The trees like god of love and flowers his arrows,
They spread sorrows of separation
And hit at the hearts of women in love.

As the flute played and called, the women in excitement lost their senses :

Somebody had smeared only half of her body
in sandal-paste
Somebody had not done her coiffure yet
Hairs loose and the garland in hand
The clothes got loose around the waist
The neckless fell from the neck
The anklets sounded loudly, the body sweated
Somebody madly put musk-mud in her eyes
And somebody else put her waist-girdle senselessly
round her neck.

Between the two, *Gopi Chandan* has a simpler and more direct

structure, both the Kavyas were equally tuned to music, and used *ragas* as per their needs, and additionally *Gopa Keli* incorporated 'Brajaboli', a literary language of the time, as a part of its structure, the first such use in Oriya Kavyas.

Rahasya Manjari in 24 cantos, gives an account of Krushna's links not so much with the Gopis, but with Radha, and tries to establish Radha's superiority over others. Its main trend is *Premabhakti,* that is, love as the dominant motivation of one's own being, and love is manifested in Radha's figure, who becomes both - a physical being full of love, as well as a figure that symbolizes the acme of love. The book depicts the beauty of seasons as well as the attractiveness of the place where dance takes place; and the immense grace and charm of the *rasa* itself; all done in a remarkable frame of soft and sweet music. Thus this is how the friends describe Krushna to Radha - "He glows like the rain-bearing clouds/ Shines more than the blue jewel/And his face is like a spotless lotus/ Attended by bees". This excites her and she implores her friends to dress her so that she can go to him - "Oh, friends, please dress me/ I will go to see him/ He blows the flute slowly/ And winks at me from a distance", and again - "Please put anklets on my feet/ I would be running in the forest/ And listening to the sound Kanhai would be restless....". Elsewhere the account of seasons with reference to the woes of the lady, is more graphic and one of the finest of such accounts in the ancient Kavyas. Thus this is how the poet speaks of the summer, and the change over to rains, and to autumn etc. First the summer :

Formidable summer, the end of Baisakh
The rain-storm blows, and fiery wind
Mangoes and jack-fruits ripen, water gets heated
I die, I die, I die -
Oh, my Lord has left me
What am I to do, what is my fault ?...

Then the rains :

The clouds gathered, rains poured
Deep darkness filled everywhere,
Thunder roared, lightening flashed,
Oh, thunder presses me, lightening startles
How should I live - Oh, without my love !

Finally, at the end of the circle of seasons - the spring, or *Basant,* when the holi festival comes and the game of colours, and women in love and devotion roam inside Brundavan remembering Radha and Madhab :

The winter ended, *phaguna* came,
The spring came with the god of love
Malaya wind blew with fragrance,
Leaves sprouted in trees and creepers,
and flowers bloomed,
Buds came in mango-trees
And cuckoos sang in mango-branches,
Holi came and Govind's festival
And they moved inside Brundavan - joyous, happy.

The poet lived at Puri, or somewhere near to Puri, and his Kavya is full of references to places and festivals at Puri. Its theme of love *(madhurjya lila),* play of soft and sweet emotions, and use of soft, musical, meaningful words and conjugation of words, have obtained for it a very eminent place among the ancient Oriya Kavyas.

Prema Panchamruta written towards the end of the 17th century, had a number of interesting features. First of all, the writer Bhupati Pandit was not a native Oriya, he was from Western India, from a Brahmin family, and had got settled at a place called Rathipur, in Khurdha area, under the patronage of the then Puri Gajapati King. Secondly, unlike many other contemporary writers, he was a good scholar, knew many languages, and by his own efforts learnt Oriya and acquired proficiency in the language. Initially he was not a Vaishnav, but later got initiated into

Vaishnavism and wrote his only Kavya in a strong devotional mood *(Bhaktirasa)*. *Prema Panchamruta* was written in a simple, sweet language, in popular Bhagabat-metre, and describes the love of Gopis for Krushna at Brundavan, and the related incidents. In addition, Bhupati's Kavya had one distinguishing element that was not so much present in other such Kavyas of the time. It was its element of intellectual deliberation related to Vaishnavism . But generally, he wrote racily, in fine narration, and mixed up exciting incidents involving Krushna's association with the Gopis. Thus this is how he speaks of the Gopis' anger when they found that Krushna had deceived them by running away in darkness with one of the Gopis :

Why did we come, at whose bidding,
We took the reflection as real
And jumped into the well like the lion,
We saw the moon in the pot's water
And tried to catch it crazily,
We ran ran, but the thirst was never quenched,
We poured our life like water
And we became like fishes in the net,
It was like rain in the morning
That began to rain, but never rained,

Even when the Gopis got panicky in the forest mistaking a deer as a tiger, the same frame of images can be noted :

As they deliberated, the forest appeared fearsome,
They mistook a deer as a tiger and shouted to no end.
Some mistook a creeper as a snake and cried
Like the sweet noise of the cuckoos in a mango-grove,
Like a restless horde of deer when they see a hunter's net,
They got twined with each other
As if imprisoned by the god of love,
And like thousand petals of a lotus
they circled round Radha...

Elsewhere intellectual deliberations related to Vaishnavite ideas could also be noted - "God is Primordial Being, Radhika the Living/ All Gopis with Radhika's parts like life to Krushna/ The living joins the Absolute, others can't/ The Primordial and the Living are one, only links vary/Like two portions of a seed, one not two/ Two halves make one, one body into two /Whoever can be a part of Gopi's bodies and worship/ He alone is one with Krushna - a part of his body." (IInd chapter).

Jugal Rasamruta Lahari also deals with Radha and Krushna, and depicts their association and various activities. The writer Sadanand Kavisurya Brahma was also like Bhupati Pandit, a well-known scholar and knew many languages, but unlike him, he was a prolific writer and had more than 20 books, including *Jugal Rasamruta Bhanuri, Prema Kalapalata, Nisttha Nilamoni, Tattwa Tarangini* etc., and a book on Vaishnavite ideas, *Pata Ratnavali.* He was born in a Brahmin family in Saranakul area, near Nayagarh, probably in the beginning of the 18th century. His early name was Sadhu Charan, which was later changed to Sadanand, after he got initiated into Vaishnavism, and was given the title 'Kavisurya Brahma' by the Gajapati King Birakeshari Dev, in recognition of his scholarship and poetic merit. He earned name as a propagator of Vaishnavism, moved from place to place, established *mathas* and laterly became the teacher of Avimanyu Samant Simhar, the poet, initiated him into Vaishnavism, and also stayed at his place, Balia. The main theme of Kavisurya Brahma's writing was a depiction of *Radhakrushna Lila* with its variant moods, beginning from calm, tranquil sentiments to emotions of friendship, obedience and sweetness of love etc. This was allied with the poet's deep knowledge of Vaishnavite ideas about Radha and Krushna and his poetry showed a mixture of intellectualism with emotional literary flourishes, the type we have noted to an extent in Bhupati Pandit. *Jugal Rasamruta Lahari* is a fine piece of writing, quite popular, and owes its eminence to its exposition of the theme in intense

emotional units, as well as in its deft use of colloquial language in a fine frame of music. A good example is when Krushna is late in rising and he is called by his people to wake up :

Somebody calls O Govind
Somebody calls O Binod
Somebody says O, O, Black One
Somebody says wake up, you clever one,
The night is over
Oh, my jewel, don't sleep so far into day.

But Krushna had his union with Radha in the night, and he is enjoying the post-pleasures of the union. But he finally wakes up and when with his friends his mind is full of Radha :

They gathered in the pavilion of flowers
And he addressed his friends -
Oh, dear friends,
I am drowning in the sea of pleasure
And the fire of separation burns my body,
Oh, I know for certain, this is the cause,
There is no pleasure in all the worlds
greater than having a woman.

Kavisurya Brahma writes easily, with a touch of distant humour, and gives his accounts with an element of earthiness.

Mathura Mangala had a different dimension than what we had seen in other Krushna Kavyas. It shifted action from Gopa to Mathura, and activities at Gopa come only as a reference. The writer Bhakta Charan Das lived in the 18th century (1729-1813), in the village Sanapadar, near Sunakhala, in Khurdha area. His early name was Bairagi Charan Pattanaik which was changed after his initiation into Vaishnavism and became Bhakta Charan Das. Like Kavisurya Brahma, his contemporary, he was much interested in the propagation of Vaishnavism, and to that end established 4 *mathas* at 4 different places, Khurdha, Banpur, Dasapalla and Sunakhala. He spent most of his time in worship, meditation,

writing and social service. He was proficient in traditional ways of disease-treatment and earned a good deal of reputation as a Vaidya. He too was an indefatigable traveller, and it is said that he travelled to many places of pilgrimages all over India by walking. A respected man during his life-time, his book *Mathura Mangala,* though only one work that he wrote, had a high place among the ancient Oriya Kavyas, and is reckoned as one of the finest.

Mathura Mangala's frame of narration is related to Krushna's story, follows the traditional line, with the difference that it begins where most others end, that is, it begins with Akrura coming over to Gopa with a letter from Kansa to take away Krushna and Balaram from Gopa to Mathura, in order to participate in Kansa's festival of the Bow. The book has 30 chapters (Chhandas). The 1st chapter is devoted to obeisance to gods. The rest 8 chapters deal with, on the one hand, Akrura's endeavours persuading all at Gopa to let the brothers accompany him to Mathura, and on the other, the sorrow of the Gopis and Jasoda, in the fear of leaving the brothers forever. The rest 14 chapters (from the 10th chapter to the 23rd) detail the journey of Rama and Krushna, Akrura's vision on the way, the entry of the brothers into Mathura, details of the city, Krushna's encounter with such persons as the washerman, the flower-vendor and Kubuja, the eagerness of Mathura's women for Krushna, Kansa's plans to get the brothers killed, the fight with the Kubalaya elephant and the wrestlers, and finally, the death of Kansa and installation of Ugrasena as the King once again and freeing Vasudev and Debaki, Krushna's parents, from the prison. The rest 6 chapters (from the 24th to 29th) constitute the third phase of the narration, where Uddhab comes to Gopa with Krushna's letter, sees the great sorrow of the Gopis, marvels at their great devotional attachment to Krushna, and returns with their letter to Krushna. The last chapter (30th) is like a sequel, and is a summing-up of attitudes, that is, first, Uddhab's desire to go and live with the Gopis because they are

the greatest devotees of Krushna anytime anywhere; secondly, the feelings of devastation at Gopa in Krushna's absence; and thirdly, a general prescription that in order to escape from the mortal coils one has to meditate on Krushna. In 30 chapters the book has a fine frame of narration - racy, pithy and sharp, and provides two levels of perception, one external, related to activities at Mathura, and the other internal that shows the involvement and mental plight of the Gopis and Jasoda, and in language which has not only the frame of colloquial speech, but also a fine frame of music and musical *ragas* - the reasons why the book has been so popular and enduring.

A few examples would be pertinent First, Jasoda's great sorrow at Krushna's departure;

Oh, my dark cloud,
If you go to Madhu Puri
How would I live
Looking at whose face?
All my ten direction would be empty,
Life would be frivolous
I would be pining for you
Day and night, Oh, my love !
Like fish without water
Like a country without a king -
Similar are the woes of the Gopis :
Somebody can't utter word
Somebody can't move a foot
Somebody's heart pounds
Some one rolls on the ground
And some one beats her breast
with both her hands,
Why should we live - they moan,
Better we take to posion
Better we jump into Jamuna

Better we put fire on ourselves..........

Thus, without Krushna, Gopa is a lost, devastated place :

How could I speak of Gopa, Says Akrura,
It would be painful,
It looks dry, desolate
The trees look thin
The cows do not give milk
The crops do not grow
The clouds do not rain
The wells do not give water
And the trees do not bear fruits.
It's all for you, O, Dinabandhu,
For your absence.

Two Kavyas, one *Rukmini Bibha* by Kartik Das, and the other *Prabandha Purnachandra* by Jadumani Mahapatra, had almost similar subject-matter, that is, the account of Krushna's life as he got settled in Dwaraka and his marriage with Rukmini, the princess of Vidarva. The stories had their elements of adventure and excitement, as the marriage negotiation that ran into slippery ground initially, because of objections put forth from Rukmini's side, ended through prowess and steadiness, to the satisfaction of both Krushna and Rukmini. The stories of course, did not have the sensitive frame we noted in Krushna's activities related to Gopa and Mathura. But they represent the paean song of the activities related to a person considered to be divine, and had strong devotional motivation. But there is a difference between the two books, particularly in linguistic arrangement, that is, in style, in the use of language and in having more or less of ornateness and rhetorical decorations. Thus *Rukmni Bibha* written in the 16th century, conformed to the ways Kavyas were written at that time-simple, direct and with a mix of colloquial speech. On the other hand, *Prabandha Purnachandra* written later under the influence of Kavyas that used ornateness and rhetorical devices had a

different stylistic organization. The result is whereas the former has an easily understood, fascinating flow of narration, the latter has tortuous use of mostly Sanskritised words that obstruct direct and easy communication. In fact, the former provides good illustrations of a racy narration, of which Rukmini's encounter with Krushna when she was abducted by the latter, is a pertinent one - "The young woman was conducted in slow steps/ Always meditating on the lotus-eyed figure/ Her left eye quivered and she came out of the temple/ She raised her face and looked up/ Saw the new god of love - their eyes met/ The Lord of the Jadus got down from his chariot quickly and held the hands of Rukmini in his hands/ ...The way the lion takes away the deer/ He who holds the Wheel took her away./ The way Garuda takes its share from among the snakes/ Banamali, the forest-dweller, took her away" (7th Chhanda). Kartik Das probably belonged to Balasore area, and in addition to *Rukmini Bibha* he wrote another Kavya, entitled *Nabanuraga* (New Love), dealing with the early activities of Krushna at Gopa. Jadumani Mahapatra was born at Athagada in the Ganjam district, but laterly settled at Itamati, near Nayagada. He too, in addition to *Prabandha Purnachandra,* wrote another Kavya, entitled *Raghav Vilas,* depicting incidents about Sri Ramachandra.

(iii)

The Kavyas dealing with fictional subject-matter constituted a good number of ancient Kavyas, and they had as good a spread as the Kavyas we have discussed earlier. They had varieties of musical structures, written in a language that was both ornate or a mix of ornate and colloquial speech or even at times more inclined towards common and conversational language, given to more of description than narration - description of nature and of woman's beauty, and invariably dealt of love, ending in union and happiness, of royal personages, particularly of princes and princesses. We

list below some of the relatively more important Kavyas for reference. Such Kavyas are, *Kalpalata, Chata Ichhabati, Shasisena, Parimala* and *Premalochana* etc. in the 16th century ; *Anangarekha, Lilabati* and *Sarvanga Sundari* in the 17th; and *Rasasindhu Sulakshyana, Kanaklata* and *Shasirekha* in the 18th century.

Kalpalata by Arjun Das, was the poet's second work after *Rama Bibha,* and like the later was arranged in musical metres and was also written in simple, colloquial language, largely free of Sanskrit influence. The descriptions related to nature, or love - union or even woman's beauty are sparsely given, and in a way, are controlled accounts, without given to details particularly related to love and sex. The story is fictional, about two semi-divine beings, an Apsara called Surekha and a Gandharva called Basantak, who were in love with each other, but were cursed by Indra for their acts of indiscipline and were born as human beings, the lady as Kalpalata, the princess of Karnata, and the Gandharva as Amarsikh, the prince of Mallal. As they grew up they remembered their past lives and tried to get united. But the union was not smmoth. It had social and otherwise hurdles. The parents in the social way, had fixed up the princess's marriage with another prince, that resulted in the lady committing suicide and the impasse was finally resolved with Amarsikh, the lover, getting the princess re-live with the help of this *mantras* and marrying her with her parents consent who had no objection once they came to know of his identity as a prince. Even after that there were difficulties, as Amarsikh was abducted by Naga women and was finally returned to Kalpalata who in great agony of separation, was on the verge of sacrificing her life once again. The story has a simple outline, yet to some extent tortuous, with elements of miracle and unreality etc., but was popularly accepted being in conformity with the newley-emerging fictional Kavya tradition of the time. An interesting aspect of *Kalpalata* can be noted in its many references to Sri Jagannath, even at times

without any context, with reference to Sri Jagannath's dress, food, worship and rituals etc. an indication that even though the Kavya was conceived as a fictional account of love and sex, yet its inherent frame was religious - a habit that can be noted with many other subsequent Kavya-writers.

Chata Ichhabati by Banamali Das, was a small Kavya in 6 cantos. Its story outlines based on a folk-tale was quite simple even simpler than that of *Kalpalata,* that is, love between two young people, and in spite of hurdless, ending in marriage and happiness - the description and environment are such that it appears as if it is a familiar love-story, penned in the recent times. Initially it has a social-point almost similar to that we have noted in *Kalpalata,* that is, the marriages of the youngsters, to be fixed up by parents without the persons concerned having a choice. In *Kapalata* the person concerned was the king's daughter who resented the arranged marriage and committed suicide. In *Chata Ichhabati* the person is the king's son who rejected the marriage arranged for him, and because he had greater freedom of movement in comparison to that available to the young woman, left his father's kingdom and went away on his own. That is the beginning of the story, that depicts how the young prince, unknown to others, came to a neighbouring kingdom where he spotted a school conducted by a lone teacher *(guru),* stayed with him, met a co-student, the young princess of the kingdom, fell in love with her, met with severe hurdles when the fact was detected to the extent that he was almost going to lose his life, but finally everything was resolved amicably and he got married to the princess and the story ended happily. It was love at the first sight, having a common social environment, and the emphasis was on intensity of emotion of both the persons. Thus what is extolled is not the love-association, but love itself, as in the young woman's statement to the youngman :

You say you are a poor man, no money

But you have the wealth of love - what else is needed ?
Oh, what a noble man says is like a carving on a stone,
You are poor, but of great treasure to me.
So long I am alive, you are my life
What should I do with wealth.
A foolish woman looks for wealth
A woman who knows, looks for love. (IInd Chhanda)

In fact, the expression of love-emotion in *Chata Ichhabati* functions at a level of normalcy, and only rises to an intensity when the occasion comes, as in the mental plight of the princess when the prince was going to be beheaded. On the whole, the Kavya not only functions at an easy, pleasant level, in simple, colloquial speech, easily to be understood, but also free of the influence of contemporary Sanskrit Kavyas, and communicates a situation and a psychological mood much appreciated by the readers. Banamali Das probably belonged to north Orissa, as there are references to local rivers and places, and was a devote of Sri Jagannath whom he has referred in many places of his Kavya.

Shasisena by Pratap Roy in 14 cantos, took his story also from a folk-tale, that mixes up human beings with supra-human beings and reality with unreality, and common incidents with magic and miracle. It has also a social point like what we found earlier, that is, a like situation - the freedom in choice of marriage of persons concerned. In *Kalpabata* the girl committed suicide, in *Chata Ichhabati* the boy left home, in *Shasisena* the person concerned, the young princess Shasisena is much more assertive. She makes her choice of the partner on her own, decides for marriage and goes through it, and leaves her father's place and goes along with her husband seeking her own fortune. The affair did not end there, She had to pass through extremely adverse situations when thrice she had to lose her husband, once when her husband was swallowed up by a demon, secondly, when he was transformed into a lamb by a magician-woman, and thirdly, when

he was abducted by his former Naga wives away from the earth into the Naga kingdom. But every time she fought it back, every time she rescued her husband, and finally established her love and right over her husband, and also got back the right over the kingdom she had lost - an extremely interesting account, of feminist mode, after Balaram Das's *Laxmi Purana,* that had established woman's power and strength. To that extent, *Shasisena* remains as a singular Kavya that not only speaks of love, marriage, free choice in marriage and unitary relationship between married couple, but also provides an advancement from a woman's. helpless condition to a woman of power and strength who dominates and decides. *Shashisena* has also other aspects. First, its story-line is good, though slightly involved and complicated, but having a folk-tale frame and ballad-type raciness, it gets an easy acceptance. Secondly, though it shows trends of contemporary Sanskrit Kavyas more than what we have seen in earlier Kavyas, particularly related to rhetorical and ornamental devices, yet by and large, its language is simple and colloquial-based. Thirdly, it provides awareness of nature by depicting its beauty as also animation, with relation to human activities. Thus on the occasion of the marriage of the hero and the heroin the nature has taken the place of absent items :

> The cuckoos like women sang the *mangal* songs
> The bumble-bees sounded the conch in the form of
> *malli* buds,
> And the parrots and the mynas chanted the Vedas.

Long afterwords one may note the similarity between such a passage and the famous account in Gangadhar Meher's Kavya *Tapaswini* (early 20th), where in Valmiki's hermitage, nature comes to Sita in the morning to wake her up. Even separately, the presence of nature is strongly felt in the long list of trees, creepers, animals and birds which the poet provides, strongly reminiscent of such accounts in Balaram Das's *Jagamohan Ramayana.* On the whole *Shasisena* has the credit of humanizing a story that has extra-human

or supra-human elements, and its poetic imagination is of a spiritual nature that aims at entertainment as well as to provide an aura of mental tranquillity to the readers. Pratap Roy was a Vaishnav, of Panchasakha line, and probably belonged to the 'Shisu' order *(Sampradaya)*, and probably belonged to Puri or had long association with Puri.

Parimala, by Narasimha Sena, in 24 cantos, was the longest among the fictional early Kavyas. We have already noted the poet's other work, *Gopakeli*, on Krushna and Gopi theme. He too, had another interesting work on the art of rhetoric, entitled *Dhaga Muktabali* (Proverbial Jewels), written mostly in terms of women's moods. *Parimala* is said to be the first fully fictional Kavya in Oriya, and like many other Kavyas, it was composed in various metrical tunes, or *ragas*. We have noted how Narasimha was both an eminent poet and a scholar and professionally a physician (Vaidya), and his writings imbibed more of Sanskrit rhetorical devices than many others, though his writing, conforming to the contemporary trends, was a good mix of Sanskrit ornateness with conversational speech. In devotional aspect too, he was largely free of mind and made references to mostly Krushna and Vishnu, and also to Sri Jagannath. But what is of significance in *Parimala* is the poet's emphasis on the heroine, Parimala, and the pivotal role she plays in the entire action. Parimala was Tillotama, the divine damsel in Indra's court, and because of Indra's curse she came over to earth and was born as the princess of Kanchi. The fame of her beauty spread everywhere, and when she came of age, the king fixed her marriage with Makarketu, the prince of Dharmabati. But at the same time the Gandharv Chitrarath, her earlier lover in Indra's court, came and demanded her youth and love, which she could not refuse. Then her marriage with Makarketu was solemnized, and additionally the husband came in, that began a real problem for Parimala, who had to contend with two lovers, one from the earth and the other from the heaven.

The turn of the events subsequently became complicated, a crisscross between the earth and the heaven, when alternatively one of the lovers dominated over the other, till finally, Parimala stuck to her earthly lover and through the good wishes of Indra, she could come over to earth, and had a long and happy conjugal life with her husband who became a great king. As in the case of Shasisena, here too, Parimala's role has been crucial in all affairs, but in contrast to the former, whose love was devoted only to one person, her husband, Parimala's love and attachment was divided between two people. Initially it was an intense physical urge, and had two distinct dimensions, one pre-marital (the love that Parimala had with Chitrarath before her marriage), and the second extra-marital (her love for Chitrarath that continued even after her marriage). But slowly Parimala's love went through a tranformation, and moved from a physicality of sex towards a realizatiion of intensity and depth of love itself, a tranquil and attached state of mind, love as a binding and sustaining force between two people, a matter of perception, not of physicalities. This is what the Gaudiya Vaishnavas spoke of as *Bhaba Rasa,* the honey of perception, and in which Narasimha as a Vaishnav believed in. But *Parimala* had other distinguishing aspects too, for example its fascinating depiction of seasons, much more elaborate and perceptive than found in other contemporary or earlier Kavyas, comparable to a later famous Kavya, Dinakrushna's *Rasa Kallol.* Thus, this is how he speaks of the summer :

> The days ended, the summer entered
> The sky, the earth, all directions looked grey,
> *Sirisha* flower bloomed, wind carried its fragrance
> And bumble-bee began its game with trumpet-flower

and the rains :

> *Kutaj* flowers bloomed and branches rolled on the ground
> The buds of jasmine flowers opened,
> The coloured lotus showed in greater colour

And white reeds laughed in whiteness.

and the spring :

The colourful trees have closed with each other
Some of them have grown heavy with fruit,
And fruits have filled all trees
And bumble-bees are everywhere sucking honey
from flowers.

It is said that *Parimala* was an enlarged and revised version of an earlier Kavya *Parimalavati* in 21 cantos. Whatever that may be, written in the middle of the 16th century, *Parimala* remains as a remarkable work by itself, and looks forward to many poetic qualities that developed in the subsequent centuries.

Premalochana in 20 cantos, by Bishnu Das, written towards the later part of the 16th century, inaugurated new trends in the tradition of Oriya Kavyas, in the sense that it was the first, clear expression of Sanskrit ornate and rhetorical devices in Oriya Kavyas, that was profusely taken up by writers afterwards. The newness could be seen both in thematic and stylistic matters. The theme, of course, continued to be love and its ramifications such as union, separation, reunion and marriage etc., and the concomitant influences on the psychological moods of the characters, but the lines became simpler, and took to some routine and definite form. In fact the changes became more visible in stylistic and structural matters, in taking Sanskrit Kavyas and their formal manners as greater ideals, and in putting greater emphasis on rhetorical and ornate devices. In *Premalochana,* a distinct movement towards that could be noted, that is, the exposition varied, much more than what we noted in a Kavya like *Parimala,* though the story continued to be largely in old, accepted lines. Kedarnath Mahapatra (1911-1981), the noted historian, in his introduction to *Premalochana,* which he edited (1961), pointed out how Bishnu Das took Sri Harsha's *Naisadhiya Charita,* which was quite popular among the scholars at that time in Orissa, as his

model, and accordingly adopted many of its thematic and stylistic aspects in his Kavya. A trend had already set in towards the end of the 16th century among the Oriya poets, to move away from a simple, colloquial frame towards decoration and ornateness in the Kavyas. Bishnu Das was one of the first to exhibit that in good competence, and all that could be noted in plenty of poetic flourishes, use of imagery and excellence in description, which were the hallmarks of *Premalochana.* The story relates to king Sudhakar of Madhubatipur and the princess Premalochana of Padmabati, their love-negotiations through a swan, and then the *swayamvar* and the marriage, which end the first phase of the story. In the second phase the union of the lovers was disturbed by the arrival of a villain in the form of a Gandharva, the consequent separation leading to the mental plight of both the lovers, and the final reunion through divine support. As we have said, the importance of *Premalochana* does not lie in its story, but in its exposition, and a few examples would be pertinent. Thus, this is how people viewed the King coming with his new bride - "The people saw the king coming in his chariot/ And the new, lotus-faced bride in his lap/ Was she the moon born from the sea of beauty/Or Indra has put lightening in his lap/ Or is he the enemy of Samvar, coming after killing Samvar/ And has abducted Rati, the jewel of women". Similarly, in describing nature, the accounts are given at two phases. First, nature as it is, in its own identity. For example, in the 15th canto, a complete catalogue of trees, plants, creepers flowers and birds etc. in the garden where the royal couple come for enjoyment, or differently in the same canto, initially an account of a moon-lit night, that strongly articipates a similar description later, in Radhanath Roy's famous Kavya *Chilika* (later 19th century), which because of its exciting beauty becomes both a context as well as a promoter of love :

Then the night came
The artful moon rose

The drops of moon-light fell through leaves
And the garden's beauty increased as the time passed.
The pieces of moon fell on the ground
Like crystals of emerald scattered everywhere,
Of as if lotus bloomed in blue Jamuna
And tree-shades showed like black water.
They kept their clothes away
Made love in moonlight
And spent the night in joyous abandon.

Bishnu Das belonged to Puri, and spent many years under royal patronage at Banpur and Ranpur, and additionally, wrote at least two other Kavyas, *Kalabati* and *Lilabati.*

The new rhetorical trends initiated by Bishnu Das moved towards a good flowering in Dhananjoy Bhanja and in his Kavya *Anangarekha.* Dhananjoy (1611-1701) was the king of Ghumsar in Ganjam, and additionally he also wrote a few other Kavyas such as *Madanmanjari, Tripursundari,* and *Ichhabati,* all fictional ones, and *Raghav Vilas* related to the Ramayana He lived a luxurious life as a king, and was good deal addicted to music and literature. In his Kavyas he generally conformed to the traditional trend of Kavya-writing that we have noted in such Kavyas as *Kalpalata, Chata Ichhabati, Shasisena* and *Parimala* etc., a structural simplicity, based on common, conversational speech, without much of ornamentation. But he too, took up the lead provided by Bishnu Das, moved towards more of ornamentation and rhetorical devices, and took the pattern of Sanskrit Kavyas as his model. Particulaly, one thematic aspect that he highlighted was related to the physicalities of love - the erotic sentiments related to sexual union, and the act of union itself. This was a new aspect which came to a fruition little laterly in the Kavyas of Upendra Bhanja, grandson of Dhahanjoy. Otherwise Dhananjoy's Kavyas, both in matters of story and in the manner of writing, had a traditional frame. The story freely borrowed both from *Parimala*

and *Premalochana,* and tells how the heroin Anangarekha, who was initially an Apsara in Indra's court, was banished to earth under a curse, and was born as the princess of Karnat. Then as she came of age, she had feelings of love for Kusumaketu, the prince of Kasi, whom she was due to marry. But the marriage was disturbed by the jealous interference of her one-time Gandharva-lover. The marriage did take place a little lalerly but the jealousy of the Gandharva-lover continued, and he tried to do harm to Kusumaketu and succeded in separating the lovers physically. But at the end, the lovers were united and lived happily. Though the story took up the tradional line familiar to the readers (love, union, interference of the villain, separation, plight of the lovers, and final union), it was told racily, with suspense and excitement and incorporated aspects that enhanced the poetic quality of the Kavya as a whole. Some such aspects can be noted in the poet's description of nature and nature's beauty etc., as well as in his accounts of love and the lover's feelings. Thus, this is how the poet describes the coming of spring - an account full of joyous excitement related to desires for love - "Now listen, the spring, the king of seasons, enters/ The whole world is happy, joyous/ The victory flag of the god of love flies/ And the trees grow leaves, flowers bloom / Creepers cover trees like women in love/ Bees mad in sucking honey hum/ And the heat of the forest-fire heats the hearts of lovers/ And the wind from the Malaya hills flows softly." (IInd canto). When the rains come the clouds crouch on hill-top, and the youngman looking at the new clouds sorrowfully, is put in great sorrow thinking of the lady in separation :

Oh, Oh, my dearest lady,
My priceless chain of jewels round my neck,
Soft as the rain-tree flower, new woman, newly separated-
Look, these crazy rainy days
They make all hearts restless,
How would you tolerate that, Oh, my lady?

How could you sce the game of clouds !
I am lonely, oh, my beauty,
I don't get you, my days never end. (18th canto)

Lilabati, Rasasindhu Sulakshyana, Shasirekha and *Kanaklata* were writted by different kings of different localities, and except *Lilabati* all the rest were written under the shadow of the great poet Upendra Bhanja, particularly one being, that is, *Shasirekha,* was in imitation of Upendra's famous Kavya *Lavanyavati.* The kings were, respectively, Raghunath Raj Harichandan, who became the King of Banapur in 1655; Kesab Raj Harichandan, who was the King of Surangi in Ganjam; Padmanav Srichandan, who was the King of Banki (Cuttack district) from 1735 to 1757; and Tribikram Bhanja, great grandson of Dhananjoy Bhanja, and the king of Ghumsar from 1773-1780. As we noted, Upendra's influence was pervasive, and his poems influenced them in their poetic endeavours, except Raghunath Raj, who had preceded Upendra, and even in his case he had adopted the trend towards ornateness and ornamentation that culminated in the poetry of Upendra. The theme of all the Kavyas was love, the involvement of youngmen and young women, the princes and the princesses of different kingdoms, and attachment towards each other, initially indirectly, then directly, through union and marriage, and going through obstructions and separation, ending finally in union and happiness. Secondly, the stylistic structure in each case, apart from being extremely musical and frequently interspersed with various *ragas* and tunes, was dominated by a continuing movement towards more of ornamentation and image-making devices as well as an expansiveness of imagination not always controlled by the core of the story. This could be seen irrespective of whether they narrate a situation, or describe nature or seasonal nature, or a woman's beauty, or even how a woman is dressed, or how her friends speak about her.

Sarbanga Sundari by Lokanath Vidyadhar, written towards

the end of the 17th century also took up these trends. He got royal patronage from King Jagannath Harichandan of Banpur, where, it is said, he completed writing *Sarbanga Sundari* in around 1692, 93. In addition, he had a few more Kavyas, such as *Chitrakala, Rasakala, Padmabati Parinaya* (The Marriage of Padmavati) etc., all of which were fictional Kavyas like *Sarbanga Sundari,* and dealt with youthful love of royal persons, as well as two more Kavyas, *Niladri Mahochhaba* (The Festivals at Niladri) and *Brundavan Vihar* (The Dalliance at Brindavan), written in a devotional mode related to Sri Jagannath and Sri Krushna respectively. Lokanath's *Sarbanga Sundari* as well as other fictional Kavyas had not only similar stories as we had noted in other Kavyas, that is, feelings of love, love-negotiation, union, separation, re-union etc. but were essentially motivated towards ornateness and ornamentation, involving such rhetorical devices plentifully as simile, allegory, metonymy, metaphor, analogue, alliteration, pun etc. in language, was also largely Sanskritised. Yet Lokanath had some distinction. For example, he brought in more local colour and earthiness to his characters, that is, they assumed more of normal human characteristics than being the 'cursed' semi-divine beings going through pre-destined activities on earth. Besides, in spite of his strong tendency towards a rhetorical frame and curved, oblique use of language and Sanskritization, *Sarbanga Sundari* at many places glows with free, forceful emotion and simple direct language pleasantly akin to conversational speech. On the whole, the general tendency in the fictional Kavyas, written in the 17th and early 18th centuries, grew towards more of rhetorical and ornamental structure, in consonant with such Sanskrit Kavyas in vogue then, and came to a fruition in Upendra Bhanja in the beginning of the 18th century. Some examples from the Kavyas referred to above would be relevant. These relate to nature, like coming of a particular season, or of the night, or even an account of a garden where the ladies take a stroll

and enjoy themselves, differently detailing the physical beauties of women invariably with references to nature. Thus this is how the coming of the rains described :

The croaking of frogs overflowed the belly of the earth
The continuous noise of oysters covered days and nights
The fire in the forest lost its heat,
The cloud-flowers in heavy showers filled the earth
The rivers covered the sands and swallowed the banks
And water rushed from mountain tops full of foam.

(*Lilabati*, 27th canto)

And the coming of the night :

Then the night came
The directions were lost in darkness,
Seems the creator is out to kill the woman
And orders a deluge with collyrium away from
home water,
Or is it Rahu swallowing the earth in anger
As the sun runs away in fear.

(*Kanaklata* 15th canto)

Or, an account of a garden :

See, *Kunja* creepers newly bloomed, tremble in soft wind
And wild bumble-bees hum soft tunes
As if the lover whispers softly
When the woman in new union trembles
Oh, charming lady, see the ripe jack-fruit
See, how it covers its golden heart with a blue cloth,
See the thorns outside
Like the tips of Love's arrows they smear the juicy heart.

(*Sarbanga Sundari*, 7th canto)

Elsewhere, the references to the physical beauty of a young woman are graphically given as with reference to her tresses in *Rasasindhu Sulakshyana*, 5th canto :

See the new clouds all over the sky

With no lightening, no wind, no thunder
And with deep darkness day and night
That may be compared to her tresses.
Had there been no foam in Jamuna's water
No flow of stream in the river
No movement of aquatic animals
That may be equal to her tresses.

Or, with reference to the lady's arms, as in *Sasirekha,* 8th canto :

No, nothing equal to her comely arms
Neither the golden lotus-stalk, nor the garland of *champak*
That are marked with fibre, flawed,
The doe-eyed woman does not accept them.
Her arms are two lotuses
Adorned with *champak* buds -
How wonderful, flowers grow out of flowers,

(*iv*)

We have seen how Kavyas constituted a very strong component of ancient Oriya literature. In a period of about 300 years, particularly, from mid-16th century till mid-19th, a large number of Kavyas were written, and quite a good number of writers achieved prominence and recognition. We have also noted their categories and trends, and to what extent they sustained and continued Oriya literature, and in general, the strength of Oriya creative mind through difficult times and situations. Among them all, particularly three writers achieved great eminence, and came to be reckoned as three best writers of Kavyas, in fact, three best writers of ancient Oriya literature, in class with earlier Sarala Das, Balaram Das, Jagannath Das and Achyutananda Das, and laterly with Kavisurya Baladev Rath, Gopalkrushna, and Bhima Bhoi. These writers were Dinakrushna Das (approximately, from 1650 to 1710), Upendra Bhanja (approximately, from 1670 to 1740) and Avimanyu Samant Simhar (1757 - 1806). They belonged

respectively to Puri, Ghumsar, and a place called Balia, near Jajpur, and their most famous Kavyas were *Rasa Kallol* by Dinakrushna, *Baidehisa Vilas, Lavanyabati* and *Prema Sudhanidhi* by Upendra, and *Bidagdha Chintamoni* by Avimanyu.

Rasa Kallol, literally Waves of *Rasa*, is a Krushna-Kavya that is, it depicts activities of Krushna, and all emotional activities related to him, both at Gopa and at Mathura, till Kansa was killed. Its nearest comparison is Bhakta Charan's *Mathura Mangala* and at a distance Narasimha Sena's *Gopakeli.* But it is the former which has the closest similarity with *Rasa Kallol* as both have the similar pattern of thematic development, and have successfully exploited a palatable mix of polite words with conversational speech and could develop a structure that could establish a direct rapport with the readers. But there are differences too, even in matters of structure. Thus whereas *Mathura Mangala's* 30 cantos are almost evenly divided between Gopa Lila and Mathura Lila, it is not so in *Rasa Kallol.* Out of its 34 cantos, 23 cantos deal with Gopa Lila, only 10 with that of Mathura, which by itself is an indication where the poet wants to put his emphasis. Then whereas narration and speed of narration takes precedence in *Mathura Mangala,* it is description and expansion of emotion which are more important in *Rasa Kallol.* It has greater psychological range, greater complications of emotions, an intenser awareness of man's plight, both mental and social - a larger concern not to tell a story so much as to infuse a mood, and a frame of mind which is not only related to layers of understanding but also to a relationship that transcends physicalities to grow into an almost semi-divine perception.

Referring to the story-structure of Rasa Kallol the poet himself made a pertinent remark, that he had combined two aspects - *dibya* and *adibya,* that is, something which was miraculous and supra-human *(dibya)* and something else which was not so, and had normal, human frame (*adibya*). The two phases of the story -

activities at Gopa and activities at Mathura, had each both these aspects. Thus relating to Gopa, such incidents as the birth of Krushna, the killing of Putana, the chastisement of Kaliya snake and even the peculiar form of *Rasa* dance etc. can be considered as miraculous, and on the other hand such other incidents as naming Krushna, his growing-up period as a child, stealing of clothes of the Gopis and even the account of physical love-unions with the Gopis described separately from *Rasa* dance, are normal human situations. In activities related to Mathura too, the two levels can be noted. Thus such incidents as the killing of the washerman, rescuing the flower-man, transforming Kubuja, the deformed woman, and killing the elephant, the wrestlers and even Kansa are miraculous ones, whereas the rest are normal human activities. *Rasa Kallol* had the frame of traditional Krushna-story, but Dinakrushna was not narrating a traditional tale, he chose situations and incidents that suited his purpose and point of view, and highlighted such aspects that he thought needed highlighting. He made a fine amalgamation of miraculous with human activities, of physicalities with mental perceptions. The frame that he used combined musicality, flexibility and suppleness of the language on the one hand, with gesture, connotation and metaphorical strength on the other, along with an extra-ordinary expansion of creative imagination. On the whole he made out a work of art from a familiar traditional tale - one of the finest in the whole gamut of ancient Oriya Kavyas.

An extremely fascinating aspect of *Rasa Kallol* could be seen in its graphic and comprehensive account of nature, particularly as related to seasons. Since a point of the subject matter of *Rasa Kallol* relates to Krushna's amorous early life, the accounts of seasons are linked to the changing moods of the characters in love. But the accounts in themselves have a lot of sweetness and charm and also a newness of perception where the seasons grow to have a living entity.Thus when the spring comes and the south

wind blows, it is the time for the flowers and fruits and sweet singing birds. But most important is, it becomes synonymous with the God of Love who provokes love in love-lorn hearts. The summer follows the spring. The fruits ripen, but many flowers cease to bloom and people dance on the scorching ground like horses dancing on the battle-field. Also fire breaks out in forests, and mirages can be frequently seen. Then the rains come. The clouds overcast the sky, days become dark, the insects, birds and animals become happy, the earth becomes cool and watery, and farmers work happily in the fields, and green vegetation sprouts everywhere. This is how the coming of the spring is described :

> The time of flowers came
> And the wind blew from the south,
> The messenger of Lord Kamadeva
> Sang excitedly in five tunes,
> The Love God's pride became intolerable
> And the love-obsessed women got frightened of flowers...

And the summer coming after the spring :

> Slowly the sweet season ended
> And the summer time came
> And the rays of the thousand-blended sun became
> fierce as fire.
> Oh good men, what to say how earth burnt,
> And the travellers danced
> Like the horses in the battle-field....

And then the rains :

> Slowly the summer was over
> The month of *Asadha* came
> And dark, threatening clouds rose in the sky,
> They roared fearfully far and near
> Swallowed the tops of hills
> And all directions were lost in darkness. . . .

It is not only in fine description, but in style and language-

use too, the poet has his own distinction. We have noted how he made a pleasant mix of Sanskrit or polite words with colloquial speech. The most important device he adopted is the use of *Ka*, the first vowel-letter of *Oriya* alphabet. Prof. K.C. Sahoo points out how the whole of *Rasa Kallol* is a 'wave' of *Ka*. In fact it is everywhere - at the beginning of the line always, in the middle, in the divisions, as well as at times at the end, an unusual device without any precedent, and carried to almost perfection, fully adjusted to content and the sound, without any hitch whatsoever. Even, at times almost all the words in a line, in a stanza, begin with *Ka*. for example, as in canto 7 (in original,)

Kalindijala Kallol Kautukakari
Kadambatalabihari kalabenudhari
Kekipuchha mandana kanakaniva basa
Kamakeli karibaku kale avilasa.

Or elsewhere in the same canto,

Kutilakuntala kamakelikala kusala kamala badana
Karindragamana karikumbhastana kundakaljita radana.

Prof. Sahoo has counted that including *Ka* at the beginning of every line, there are a total 350 *Ka* sound-units in the whole of *Rasa Kallol* that have provided a remarkable alliterating soft musical frame to the structure of the Kavya. The only other poet to be compared with Dinakrushna to this effect, was Upendra Bhanja. Differently apart from a general stylistic arrangement of sound, music and meaning, the poet has also picked up certain words and used them suggesting different motivations and meaning. Such a word is *Kala*. Literarily it means 'time'. But it also carries many other meanings which vary depending on the particular use and context. Thus, in addition to time it may also suggest period of time, period of life, age, season as well as death and God of Death etc. *Kala* as used in *Rasa Kallol* has an extended environment. The poet points out that *Kala* is all things. It controls all, it moves everywhere - heaven, earth, nether world. Therefore,

not only human beings but Lord Krushna himself, the God, is also under its control and works as it decides. Thus Krushna's incarnation, his enemity towards Kansa and consequences, are all undertaken by *Kala,* who is supreme, not Lord Krushna or Lord Jaganath. Then when Krushna enters Mathura, God of Love swallows Mathura's women like *Kala* swallowing all of them, and for Kansa Krushna himself is *Kala.* Even when the poet describes the rainy season, it is *Kala* who like Vishnu covers all around "dense, uncut, compact." In short in *Rasa Kallol,* the word *Kala* assumes a meaning, and conjures up an environment that covers all, the poem, the poet, and even the poet's God - an indication of *Rasa Kallol's* structural complexity.

Rasa Kallol is a figurative kavya, structured in rhetorics. It has used a number of rhetorical devices, such as simile, metaphor, allegory, alliteration, pun, analogue, gesture, hyperbole and parallelism etc. But that which emerges through all these - in a way which can be called the real distinction of *Rasa Kallol* - is not something tortuous, curved and clever, but a spontaneous poetic flow, that immediately pleases and fascinates, even before the meaning is understood. It is largely because the poet has kept his purposes steady and unsullied, to sing of Krushna, to sing of the glories of his Name, to narrate his tale and to meditate on his immense beauty and grace. In *Rasa Kallol* Krushna's character is seen at two levels. First, through normal accounts of the story, and secondly through the emotions emerging from the poet's heart that figure out actions, forms, colours, decoratios as well as glory. The poet's advice to the readers to that extent in the first canto is significant :

Meditate on Krushna's form
Sing of Krushna's life
Listen to Krushna's tales
Know this world as of Krushna.

Rasa Kallol's excellence lies there - in its intimacy and intensity

for Krushna and the competence with which that is communicated to the readers.

Dinakrushna was a Karan by caste and a Vaishnav. He was well-known as an eminent scholar, well-versed in Sastras. Though very much attached to Puri and Lord Jagannath he had to leave Puri in his later life. It is said, it was because of the intransigence of the then king of Puri towards him, though the king himself was a patron of literature and music. The king wanted to have verses composed in his name which the poet refused to do. Surendra Mohanty, the critic and novelist, thinks that as Dinakrushna was an independent-minded person, he could not accept the terms of the then establishment, and could not also toe the line of Radha-Krushna Kavyas written at that time. Hence he could not get as much credit as he should have got for his remarakable work and he had to leave Puri, his place, under duress, and got into destitution which should not have his destiny. Whatever that may be, the poet's castigation of people around him is sharp and vivid:

They put plentiful decorations on their bodies
So that nobody could know the sin hidden inside,
Look, look, how wonderful they appear.
Just like a painter's mat.
Every word they utter is like an arrow
Oh, Oh, Lord, why put Dinakrushna to this plight.
It's a pity when the poet praises a fool
What can be a greater suffering than that
Better to strike at one's own breast and die. (16th canto)

Elsewhere he complains to Lord why he has made him a man and not an insect in his flower. Then he would not have forgotten him for the needs of his cursed stomach, and would have gone only dancing for him. Then he would not have been a servant to a stupid master, or an invisible dancer to somebody else's tunes, or like a deaf who talks, or like a stupid monkey who tries to eat the sauce of coconut failing eating it. The poet's anger was specific. We can

only imagine what privation and destitution this extraordinary poet, whose work is now equated with that of Jayadev's great work *Gita Govind*, must have gone through because of a self-motivated, hostile set-up. As Mohanty said, the poet had to pay the price for independence and self-respect.

An interesting legend connects Dinakrushna with Upendra Bhanja in the public mind. They both were contemporaries, though Upendra was slightly younger in age. They knew each other, and it is said, they also met at Puri. What is pertinent is Upendra's reference to Dinakrushna. Once when asked about his own poetic competence, Upendra pooh-poohed every other poet except Jayadev and Dinakrushna. Whatever may be the basis of the legend it shows Upendra Bhanja's awareness of two very important trends of the then literary situation, one for Sanskrit, a pan-Indian language and also a pan-Indian influence, and the other for the local language, that is Oriya, and both the pride and recognition for the language. Upendra Bhanja wrote in Oriya, and got eminence as a great poet. But he was well-versed in Sanskrit, acquired profound scholarship in Sanskrit Kavya, literature and in general in Sanskrit learning, freely used Sanskrit literary devices in his Kavyas, and used Sanskrit virtues to enhance the quality of his writing. The strong trend that Sarala Das had initiated, towards establishing an identity for Oriya language, and which was equally strongly supplemented, in various ways, by the writers of the 16th and 17th centuries, got a remarkable fillip in the writings of Upendra Bhanja, who liberally used both the resources of Sanskrit and Oriya, to write his great Oriya books.

Upendra Bhanja belonged to the royal family of Ghumsar, an independent kingdom in southern Orissa, till the advent of the British. The family's ancestry has been traced by the historians to 9th, 10th centuries and to the ancient house of the Bhanjas in Mayurbhanja, in northern Orissa. The family chronicles list a large number of kings till we come to Dhananjoy Bhanja, in the 17th

century, the poet about whom we have already noted, and who reigned for more than 60 years. Dhananjoy was Upendra's grandfather, under whose affectionate protection, and steady encouragement, Upendra learnt his lessons, quickly matured into remarkable poetic-competence, so much so, that even the elderly poet Dhananjoy himself recognized the superiority of his grandson in his twenties, and sought advice from him for his own writing. After Dhananjoy's death the things became different, the royal household got involved in palace-intrigues, in depositions and murders. Initially Upendra's father Nilakantha became the King. But he could not protect his throne, and in his turn was driven away by his cousin-brother Ghanasyam Bhanja who became the King. Nilakantha with his wife and son Upendra, left Ghumsar, and settled in Nayagad, in his father-in-Law's kingdom. It was a godsend for Upendra, to be away from mean palace-intrigues. He did not have much difficulties afterwards. His rapport with Ghanasyam Bhanja was good, who himself was a poet and at one time wanted Upendra to resettle at Kulad, Ghumsar's Capital. By the time Upendra left Ghumsar, when he was about 30, his reputation as a poet was already made. In Nayagad, it is said, he was divinely blessed, when he worshipped Sri Ramachandra at Odagaon in Nayagad, through 'Rama Tarak Mantra', and got the God's blessings. It is also said that to celebrate the occasion, he wrote his great Kavya *Baidehisa Vilas,* detailing the life of Sri Ramachandra and offered it as his offering to the Lord. Upendra did not suffer the privation and pangs of poverty as Dinakrushna did. He was born in affluence and stayed in comparative affluence. By combining his immense Sanskrit learning, which effectively silenced all his adversaries at a time when Sanskrit was given the highest credit, with a pride for Oriya, he not only assured a very high position for himself among the poets, but also established the fast growing Oriya literature in an absolutely firm footing.

Upendra Bhanja in one of his books, *Chitrakavya*

Bandhodaya (The Frames of Pictorial Kavyas) lists many of his own writings. These include Kavyas as well as many smaller compositions, which he called *Chautisa*, *Chaupadi* ... *Gaha*, *Doha*, *Sodasendu*, *Chhapoi* etc., to which we may also add songs of love - 'poems uncountable' as he says. In fact, in a period of about 50 years, which the scholars calculate to be his probable creative period, he had innumerable compositions of all types, of which Kavyas were many. The Kavyas can be categorized in traditional groups, that is, Rama or Krushna Kavyas, Kavyas based on Puranic stories, and Kavyas dealing with fictional stories, as well as other types of compositions including scholarly discussions on rhetorical devices and word-formations, accounts, of the glories of Purusottam Kshetra (Puri), and a light, semihumorous, sexually tinged account of the market-place and of the lower rungs of society that come to the market The writings exhibit a good deal of seriousness and a mind deeply engaged in whatever he speaks out, with a good amount of knowledge and scholarship not usual with people. At the same time they also exhibit a mind which is alert, fun-loving and expansive, along with a pride and sense of superiority related to his own craft and creative talent. Some of the relatively more important Kavyas that have contributed substantially to the poet's reputation are, *Baidehisa Vilas* (The Story of Baidehi) that depicts the story of Ramayana; *Lavanyabati* (Labanyabati), *Koti Brahmanda Sundari* (Koti Brahmanda Sundari), *Prema Sudha Nidhi* (Prema Sudha Nidhi), *Rasika Haraboli* (Rasika Haraboli) and *Rasalekha* (Rasalekha), all fictional stories dealing with love of young persons and associated situations; *Kala Kautuka* (Artful Fun) and *Chhanda Bhusan* (Decorative Chhandas), both about Krushna Leela; *Suvadra Parinaya* (The Marriage of Suvadra) related to Suvadra's marriage to Arjun from the Mahabharat; and *Rasapanchak* (Five *Rasas*) and *Chitrakavya Bandhodaya* that deal with rhetorical and ornamental devices used in Kavyas to extract *rasa* or the juice of

pleasure.

Baidehisa Vilas, completed in 52 cantos, by the poet's own admission, gave him the greatest satisfaction in writing *("By* designation a great hero/Upendra my name/ I worshipped Rama and Sita again and again/ My intelligence sprouted/ My poetic faculty became multi-coloured, variegated/ I composed Ramayana, my greatest happiness."). The poet's sources were 'many. Beginning from Valmiki's Ramayana he went over to Vyasa's *Adhyatma Ramayana*, Hanumat Kabi's *Mahanatak*, Kalidas's *Raghu Vansa*, Bhojraj's *Ramayana Champu* and Balaram Das's *Jagmohan Ramayana* etc. But his indebtedness was mostly in matters of frame and sentiment to which he added his remarkable imagination and equally remarkable style and structural arrangement.

Thus *Baidehisa Vilas* is not just a Ramayana-story told vertically, but told with frequent horizontal expansions, not episodic. but with episodes and different situations and events, including the mutual relations of characters and the complications of their sentiments. The poet excluded the later portion of the Ramayana, that is Sita's banishment, the birth of her sons, and her final entry into the bowels of the earth. But in the rest of the portions that he kept, his purposes were basically two-fold, first to hold up Rama and Sita in their divine aura, and secondly, to realize them in human terms as people who suffered and yet came out triumphant, and to whom people in distress can look forward to, for solace. Similarly his poetic skill too, functioned at two levels. First, it provides immediate satisfaction to the uninitiated even though he does not understand the exposition fully. Secondly, it is a challenge to the initiated to understand and make sense of the poets structural arrangement A pertinent example would be the beginning (the 1st stanza) of *Baidehisa Vilas.* It is a prayer apparently, to Lord Vishnu and it runs(in original) as follows :

Bandai dinabandhab Hari je tamachakra khandankari

Sada Kamalananda bistari swobhave ina je,
Bibhu Ananta anka bihari kara pratap jar sanchari
Nisacharanka ullas-hari puje suman je,
Bainateya jaha agrate sthita je
Baikuntha-pakhyak-loka toshit je,
Bikash akshandit-mandale simhabhabare kridita kale
Bhabe tarani hoi manjula giri udita je.

It is, as we said, a prayer to Vishnu, and in translation it runs as follows - "Vishnu, the friend of the poor, who with his wheel cut Rahu into two, he who drives away sorrows and ignorance, who increases the joys of Laxmi, who is Laxmi's master and contains all beauty, who plays in the lap of Primordial Snake, whose prowess takes away the pleasure of demons, who is worshipped by gods, in whose front Garuda forever stays, who satisfies all his devotees, who is manifested in the whole universe, who played at the time of lion-incarnation, who is like a boat *(tarani)* in the sea of the world, and who is manifested at Nilagiri (Blue Hill), I bow to that Vishnu." But the arrangement of words and the suggestion of their meaning, are such that the same stanza can also be interpreted as a prayer to Lord Surya (Sun), which is as follows - "Surya, the day's friend, who destroys all darkness, who increases the joys of lotus, who makes everywhere lighted with his rays, who plays in the lap of unending sky, whose rays take away happiness from the owl, whom the wise men worship, in whose front Aruna always stays, whom Indra helps, seeing him all feel happy, who exists in full round shape, whose heat is best in the Lion Zodiac, who is famous in the world as *Tarani,* who rises daily in the Rising hill, I bow to that Surya."

We see how two meanings can emerge from one language-unit, but in no way the original structure is affected, and the thrust towards creating an atmosphere of prayer is skilfully and substantially established. The similar creativity can also be seen elsewhere, in completely different contexts, such as when Rama

and Lakshman along with Viswamitra come to the bank of Ganga for crossing it on their way to Mithila, or at Mithila when Sita its being brought as a bride to the marriage-altar. Both the occasions have been composed in extremely memorable lines, and in deft placing of finely alliterative and connotative words along with equally deft use of rhetorical devices. The result is that the occasions do not stay as 'occasions' in the book, they become widely popular songs sung everywhere, in Orissa's 'countryside. That is Upendra's forte. He plays so nimbly with words, word-arramgements, the inherent musicality and the emergent meaning, like an expert musician playing with his reeds. A fine example is a situation where Rama and Sita (the doe-eyed lady) are taking a stroll in the forest (Baidehisa Vilas, 19th canto). The time is towards evening. The rays of the sun have lessened, the overhanging creepers have made the place shady, the stream murmurs at a distance, the colourful flowers bloom everywhere, the place is cool like the moon's cool rays or like musk, and the cuckoos sing sweetly around The canto is in the *raga Pancham Biradi*, in a fine conjugation of alliterative and repetitive words suggesting different strands of meaning, and as a whole, what obtains is a highly captivating and relaxing environment.

Upendra Bhanja considered *Lavanyavati* as his best work. It was so, *Baidehisa Vilas* had certain restrictions. It used *Ba*-sound *(Ba* is the 22nd consonant sound of Oriya alphabet), like *Ka*-sound in *Rasa Kallol,* throughout the narration, and hence had to adjust with necessary verbal and structural arrangement. Secondly, as it had a devotional frame, Rama and Sita being the deities the poet worshipped, he had to speak about them with reverence. Thirdly, as per the original epic, the content-lines were fixed, and there was not much scope to deviate. And lastly, by the very nature of *Baidehisa Vilas,* which the poet conceived in the lines of earlier great Oriya epics, particularly Balaram's *Jagamohan Ramayana,* where the poet was eager to establish his credentials, manifesting

to what extent he could improve upon the earlier one and utilize the immense resources of Sanskrit Kavyas available to him, and at the same time not to tread upon the contemporary social and religious ideas, he had to work with sufficient deliberation and care - almost a psychological situation. In composing *Lavanyabati* the poet did not have to face all these hurdles. Hence his mind became a free-ranging one, poetic imagination expanded, his scholarship assumed a supple, flexible frame, and he was at liberty to utilize rhetorical devices, at option, whatever suited his purposes best. At the same time, he took up the most acceptable theme, the traditionally tested theme for Kavyas, that is, love, extricated it from Krushna frame, and worked upon it fictionally and developed its many dimensions structurally exploiting the rich resources of music, to the great pleasure of his readers. If *Baidehisa Vilas* made people aware of a great talent, *Lavanyabati* established its greatness. It was written in 48 cantos, and used such well-known *ragas* as, *Nalinigauda*, *Basant*, *Desakshya*, *Chokhi*, *Bhairav*, *Kamodi*, *Malob*, *Baradi* and *Kalyanahari* etc. in different cantos. Also its first prayer, like that of *Baidehisa Vilas's* can be interpreted as prayers to three persons, Sri Rama, Parasuram and Balaram. It is said that, in writing *Lavanyabati* Upendra was probably influencecd by the poet Anadi Mishra's Sanskrit drama *Manimala* and Hindi poet Mallik Mahammed Joyce's *Padmabati*. *Lavanyabati* is a love-romance, the development of love between Lavanyabati, the princess of Simhala, and Chandravanu, the prince of Karnat, whose births were divinely ordained. Both of them independently grew up into youth and beauty, came to be aware of each other through the solicitations of friends, exchanged letters, developed strong desires of love for each other, and met each other through arrangement of friends at the temple at Rameswar where love was firmly planted. That is the first phase. In the second phase the marriage negotiation was brought forward, was accepted by the parents, Chandravanu with his people came to Simhala for

marriage, the details of the marriage, Chandravanu's return to his place with his bride, and the love-union between the two. In the last phase, the interference of the jealous gods of heaven, the separation and the accompanying mental plight, and the final reunion again through divine support. As can be seen, the story has traditional story-line of such Kavyas, with emphasis no doubt on love-romance, but more importantly on marriage, on one to one love-relationship, within social ambit (ref. aspects of pre-marital and extramarital love in Narasimha Sena's *Parimala),* and interestingly taking the whole of ancient India within its ken, that is, in addition to Simhala, Karnat (Karnatak), Rameswar and also the forests adjoining Kaveri, Sindhu (Sind) and Uttarakuru (in the north) etc., and achieving a structural inter-relationship between reality and unreality and between the human and the semi-divine and divine beings. In fact, *Lavanyabati* was not just on simple love, or just a love-romance. It explored many facets of love, from physical to mental, psychological, even spiritual. It celebrated 'abundance' - abundance of emotions, sentiments, feelings and moods, with impeccable artistic craftsmanship, and always with a tendency towards an extremely joyous youthfulness as the prime motivation of life. *Lavanyabati* remains even today, as few other Oriya Kavyas have done, as a remarkable creative work on love in the whole range of Oriya literature.

It would be a pleasure to cite a few examples from *Lavanyabati.* For example, in canto 22, what is given is a description of rainy season, and Lavanyabati's sorrows at separation from her lover, a description that contains both emotional involvement and detached ingenuous account :

> When the new clouds gathered in the sky and the white swans flew in a line, the friends of the lady remembered Lord Mahadev. They wondered how they could save the lady who walked as gracefully as an elephant. If they could live in emotion despite the

> rains, the glory would remain forever. The days were short, and it was a bad time because the lover was away. The rains people welcome, but for lovers and ladies in love, it is as poisonous as a snake. The rains extinguish the fire on the mountains, they rescue the earth from the scorching heat of the sun, but the fire of separation that burns in human hearts is never extinguished with water ... Now in the excitement of amorous creatures in the rains the snails make noise and the cuckoos are quiet. The lady should now worship Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva, and keep jackals, the Lord's creatures, so that the jackals, may eat the snails and the fire of separation is lessened. Look, how the peacocks spread their fans and dance. Oh, the sight will kill the lady in love. What do the peacocks gain if they kill the lady who is not to be killed. Can the people please, put snares, kill the birds and offer their fans to gods who will lessen her fire of separation... (prose translation).

Or, from canto 32, in a description of the moon-lit bridal night and the lady's preparations for the love-union :

> Now the moon has risen and the silvery light fills all around. It looks as if the dark body of the night is now covered with white sandal-paste, or as if the milk-white sea mixes with the blue waters of Jamuna, or as if to cool the white-heat of the sun, the Supreme God has now filled the earth with camphor-dust, or as if Lord Shiva who carries the moon on his head has now washed the earth-house with white moon light ... The clever women attendants now come to the princess, and as the excitement of moonlight deepens, they prepare her for the bridal-bed. They ask the lady whether they should arrange her hair in

a knot or leave it like a tail. They let hang a small diamond from her nose so that it would dance when she is in love-action...

Now the decoration is done. The women show her face in a mirror and praise her beauty. They let her stand in all her wonderful glory, like a golden statue of the love-god. They put a precious, transparent cloth round her youthful body, but her youth is like an overflowing river and how can a piece of frail cloth like a bank of sand contain her... (prose translation).

Or, from canto 5, the pleasures coming from the spring season :

At this time Pravamanjula informed the beautiful damsel how the sweet spring season has entered the world. "Haven't you heard, O young lady", she said, "how the cuckoo sings again and again in the dark night ? The mild breeze had started blowing with the properties stolen from the top of Malaya hills. The bumble-bees has warned the jasmine flower that it would steal its fragrance. The lotus looks beautiful with new filaments and pollen-tubes. Plenty of flowers have bloomed to decorate the hairs of young ladies... (prose translation).

Differently, from *Prema Sudhanidhi* (canto 14), also dealing with love-romance of young people, the passion of love is expressed in the form of a letter addressed by the lover to the young lady :

You are my pair of spectacles, Oh, lady, it is lost. I am groping like a man newly gone blind, and my agony, Oh, dear lady, increases every moment. But take this, even though far away, you are still with me. Like the moon and the lotus how far they are, yet how close, how bound in love ... Oh, young lady, the leaves may fly off anywhere. But can't they not be known by the name of the tree? Oh, my friend, I am

like that to you, known as a slave of the beautiful damsel. You are like a mirage, wherever I look, you never come to me, as a reflection in a mirror never comes close.... (prose translation).

Innumerable admirers of Upendra Bhanja call him 'Kavi Samrat' (Emperor-Poet). Whatever that may be, the quality of his creativity is astounding, only comparable to the great creativity shown by Sarala Das, about 300 years ago.

Avimanyu Samant Simhar, as has been pointed out, was born in Balia area (Barua Pragana) in the Jajpur district, an area well-known for its Vaishnavite tradition, and Avimanyu, it is said, got initiated into Vaishnavism at the age of ten, remained a devoted Vaishnav throughout his life, and installed Krushna's statue (Radhamohan) in his house, and it is said, even breathed his last in front of his god. The poet's life-long attachment to Vaishnavism and to Radha and Krushna, was best expressed in his greatest work *Bidagdha Chintamoni,* which was supposed to have been written in the poet's advanced years, towards the end of the 18th century. Avimanyu,like Upendra Bhanja, was born in an affluent family, and lived affluently. He too, like Upendra, lost his wife untimely, and it is said, because of that, his mind got detached from worldly factors, and veered towards his inherent Vaishnavite trend more openly, and conceived the solidity, importance and glories of Radha-Krushna love, both in its emotional intensity and intellectual perspective. In fact, Avimanyu's propagation of Radha-Krushna theme, was like Dinakrushna's, as seen in his *Rasa Kallol,* an emphasis on pure bhakti (*suddha bhakti)* or bhakti wedded to love *(raganuga bhakti)*, in consonant with the Vaishnavite tradition of Gaudiya Vaishnavs from Bengal, as against the wisdom or knowledge mixed tradition *(Jnana misra bhakti)* of the Vaishavite tradition of Orissa. It was glorification of extramarital relationship *(Parakiya Preeti)* that had its basic religiousness in Radha-Krushna of Gopi-Krushna themes. *Rasa Kallol,* written at the beginning of

the 18th century, about 70 to 80 years before *Bidagdha Chintamoni*, was singled out for the local ire largely for this, as Orissa's Vaishnav tradition did not so much favour the extramarital motivation. But Avimanyu had almost a smooth-sailing, and *Bidagdha Chintamoni* as a great book of love of Radha and Krushna could acquire acceptance from all quarters. This was because of a change in attitude that took place in between, thanks to the efforts of Sawa Jaisingh of Rajsthan, who himself was a believer in Gaudiya Vaishnavism, who convened a large gathering of Vaishnav Heads, and effected a rapproachment, between *swokiya* and *parakiya* attitudes and beliefs. If *Lavanyabati* sang of love in a secular frame, *Rasa Kallol* and *Bidagdha Chintamoni* did so in religious frames, with the difference between the latter two being, whereas the former is a fine, sweet song of love the latter was also that, but in addition, brought in intellectual diseussions on love as such, and on Vaishnav tenets and belief.

The Kavyas that Avimanyu wrote prior to *Bidagdha Chintamoni*, were *Prema Chintamoni, Premakala, Rasabati and Sulakshyana,* and all of them were written in the later part of the 18th century. *Prema Chintamoni* (Love Chintamoni), the first-ever Kavya written by the poet, was an adaptation of Bengali Kavya *Govind Lilamruta* by Jadunandan Das, which in its turn was a translation in Bengali of Krushnadas Kaviraj's Sanskrit Kavya *Govind Lilamruta.* The original Kavya was quite popular among the Vaishnavas, and Avimanyu's adaptation had also a good acceptance. The Kavya's time of action was limited to 24 hours, that is, one day and one night, and describes various aspects of the gamut of love and love-relationship between Radha and Krushna at different hours of the day, and also as the action got on changing, from hour to hour. Though not an original one, yet Avimanyu's competence in incorporating fine music and a number of rhetorical devices, it made it a memorable one. The second work *Premakala* (Premakala), alternatively also known as *Rasakala,* by the poet's

own admission, was written when he was twenty. It had a fictional love story, of a prince and a princess, who felt attached towards each other, got married and lived happily, almost one may say, a traditional love-romance, with many similarities with Lavanyabati's story, yet like the earlier one it too shone with the poets' remarkable craftsmanship. Upendra Bhanja's influence could also be seen in Avimanyu's third work, that is, *Rasabati* (Rasabati). The story was again fictional, how Rasabati, the princess of Angadesa, who was chosen as the bride of Sudhakar, the prince of Malab, chose him in a Swayamvar, married him, and after separation for a while lived happily thereafter. One or two interesting points may be noted in the Kavya, first, that it is not the love, ending in the marriage, as usual in the Kavyas, but the reverse, that is, the marriage generated love, a deviation, but a more plausible social situation. Secondly the account of marriage is given in graphic details, almost like a photographic presentation of an important social system. On the whole, a good account of marital-relationship and marital bliss - a one to one relationship *(swokiya)*, done as before, with fine craftsmanship. *Sulakshyana* (Sulakshyana), which was written around the last decade of the 18th century, was also a love-story but not fictional, as in this case the story was taken from the Puranas. It related to the love-relationship between Sulakshyana, Duryodhana's daughter and Samba, Krushna's son, through Narada's solicitation, and in spite of initial hurdles of an impending war between Duryodhana's forces and Krushna's forces, the affair ended amicably and the marriage between the two young people was duly executed. The Kavya had *Sa* consonant-sound at the beginning of every line, and when it was first published by Braja Sundar Das, the famed-editor of *Mukura*, in the early part of the 20th century, he made a special reference to its rhetorical devices and ornamentation. It was so, and the poet himself also put an emphasis on its quality of ornamentation. In fact, among Avimanyu's early writings *Sulakshyana* distinguished itself in many

respects, such as, in its capacity to convey proper mood and *rasa*, in rich description, in its taste for ornamentation as well as in the scholarly use of rhetorical devices - in fact, a competent Kavya that substantially looked forward to *Bidagdha Chintamani* (Clever Chintamoni), the greatest work of Avimanyu.

Bidagdha Chintamoni occupies a singularly distinct place among the Oriya Kavyas. Its unprecedented scholarship, wit and intelligence, range of ornamentation, philosophical attitudes, devotional and religious motivation as well as extrordinary poetic competence, the capacity to communicate varieties of moods and emotions, and an intense felt experience, are different components of a strongly attuned perceptive experience that is in *Bidagdha Chintamoni.* It has 96 cantos, the longest ever among Oriya Kavyas, but the subject-matter was quite simple - the activities of Sri Krushna at Gopa and Brundavan, particularly his love dalliances, the mutual affections of Radha and Krushna for each other, the first rising of love and its expansion through negotiation of companions, the mutual desires to be united in love, and at the end, in the guise of sun-worship, Radha's love-tryst, garlanding Krushna, and the final love-union.

Avimanyu, like a true Gaudiya Vaishnav, believed in the ways of love and affection *(Raga marga* or Gaudiya *Prema bhakti marga).* He took Radha and Krushna as supreme examples of lovers, where love moves from a mundane level to a transcendence, and the poet worships them as gods, through *Premabhakti,* where devotion is equated with love and love with devotion. He maintains his position like that of the lady-companions of Radha, completely devoted to her, almost a part of her in her great affection for Krushna. The poet's statement to that effect is revealing when he declares that his only aim in life is how to avail the 'juice' of *Premabhakti*, and his deliverance lies not in wealth, property, position etc. but only in that situation when the lady of great beauty calls him as 'her maid' (*Dasi)* and he readily responds. *Bidagdha*

Chintamoni excels in many directions, such as in its quality and intensity of devotion and religiousness, in its immense musical structure where *ragas* and tunes have been wedded to *alankaras* and in its perceptive poetic sensibility and poetic competence. *Bidagdha Chintamoni* has always been considered as a fine work of art, in class with Dinakrushna's *Rasa Kallol* and Upendra Bhanja's *Lavanyabati,* bright specimens of excellence among the Oriya Kavyas. A few examples would be pertinent.

Thus, this is how Radha, a much troubled woman, speaks to her companion, in telling images, indicating a detached assessment of her anger :

> She says in agony,
> O my friend, find out some remedy,
> My love for Krushna, like a miser's greed
> Ruins me, O friend ;
> I am thirsty like a phlegmatic patient.
> I am crazy like a drunken man,
> Is love so versatile
> I never knew that,
> It drowns at one moment
> Burns at another,
> It's like the blacksmith's forceps, O friend,
> The mind is stunned as if haunted
> And the soul's wind moves like a snake. (canto 69).

Elsewhere, she talks to her companion, fully immersed in grief :

> Holding her hand, slowly,
> Radha speaks to her maid -
> Have you brought this sinful love
> To take my life ?
> O my friend, please go
> And talk to that person, dearest to me,
> Has he taken it up as a profession
> To kill women?

Whatever he has said
Is that true?
Would you kill a slave
Whom you have bought ? (canto 75).

Still elsewhere, her companion speaks to Krushna of her great plight, how she was crazy about whatever was dark-blue, as that had a resemblance with Krushna's dark-blue colour :

Whenever she sees a dark lotus
Her lotus-eyes look oppressed,
Whenever she sees new clouds
Her body shivers in excitement.
O, you darkly handsome,
She always wants to go to Jamuna
She always draws your picture in collyrium
And kisses it again and again.
And whenever she sees a *tamala* tree
It's strange, how she runs to embrace it .. (canto 52).

Differently, the poet narrates Jasoda's grief as Krushna has been delayed, full of motherly anxiety and sentiments :

O, my only child, my black diamond,
The only treasure of my poor home,
You are like a stick to the blind
Like a chain of jewels to my heart...
You may be sweating in the sun's heat
You may be sitting tired under a tree,
Why didn't you take your clogs and umbrella,
The forests are full of thorns that prick your feet...
(canto 67).

Even differently, apart from these outpouring of emotions, the poet speaks of love, in an expositional way - a discourse on love, as in canto 39, yet it reveals the mind's condition in a situation of intensity :

Not fire yet it burns the body

Not a weapon yet cuts into heart
Not water yet it drowns
Not narcotic yet it makes you restless
Not an angling hook yet it attracts the mind like a fish...
It's extremely difficult to stick to love's ways
It's like walking on a sharp-edged sword,
More difficult than climbing an empty space,
Like catching the wind in a snare,
To have love is like keeping mercury in hand..

But, as has been pointed out, love in *Bidagdha Chintamoni* is always wedded with devotion. The implicit trend of devotion permeats the whole Kavya, and is openly admitted in the very beginning (canto I), where Radha and Krushna are seen as prime movers, creaters and supporters of total menifestation of life everywhere, and are praised that way :

Oh, Radha Hari, unmanifested figures of love
Your incarnations express inexpressible dalliances,
You have virtues yet virtueless.
You are every being yet eternal, absolute
You begin yet without beginning....
Your winks create worlds and maintain them,
Simulating like the threads of a weaver
You play at will like a spider,
And you rise to establish dharma at all times.

Bidagdha Chintamoni is both - a competent poetic composition of sensitivity, and a powerful frame of discourse and still an extremely adorable work of a man of dedication and devotion.

(*v*)

It is a long period, about 300 years, from mid-16th till almost mid-19th, when as we have noted, a large number of Kavyas were written. It was a powerful movement, one can say, that flourished,

to some extent, with the support and patronization of people of wealth, but largely independent of that as a strong mental trend, largely with the support of people in general, many of whom were illiterate, and yet could listen, recite and sing the Kavyas that had invariably musical structures. Hence the writers took up people's language, or at least the language familiar to people, and embellished that with clever literary and rhetorical devices which readers liked. Then they took Sri Jagannath (of Puri) as the focal point, which immediately established a rapport with people in general and with their beliefs. What the Bhakti writers in the 16th century, the Panchasakhas and others, tried to do, that is, to organize people's faith and imagination as well as total living, with a view to provide a bull-work to the contempoary adversities, the Kavya-writers too, tried to do that. But they did it in a slightly different way, by making people aware of their heritage, of their substantial faith and desires, and by providing a large expansion to the imagination so that what was reality could be assessed from a different angle and different perspective. We have noted how during the same period, the Oriya nation had to undergo a time of great privation and distress, when almost the nationhood was at peril. The Kavya-writers as a whole, created a much-needed environment, and provided necessary mental support to the people, to stand up and withstand the adversities. Upendra Bhanja was the brightest star in the firmament, that could guide people and bolster their failing pride. Followed by Avimanyu, the duo could rejuvenate the atmosphere for about 100 years, till the early years of the 19th century. Prof. K.C. Sahoo and Surendra Mohanty have each noted a large number of writers who followed the lead of Upendra and Avimanyu and kept up the Kavya-stream flowing vigorously. We may note some of them here for our reference. They are Ghana Bhanja *(Rasanidhi,* the Sea of Rasa, and *Govind Vilas,* The Story of Govind), Mandaradhar Bhagirathi *(Radha Vilas,* The Story of Radha), Raghunath Bhanja *(Rasa Lahari,* The Waves

of Rasa), Sadanand Kavisurya *(Prema Tarangini,* The Stream of Love; *Prema Lahari,* The Waves of Love; *Prema Chintamoni,* Love Chintamoni), Chakrapani Pattanaik *(Krushna Vilas,* The Story of Krushna), Kesab Pattanaik *(Gopa Binod,* The Joy of Gopa), Champati Simha *(Sulakshyana),* Kunja Bihari Pattanaik *(Kunja Bihar,* The Game in the Arbour), Maguni Pattanaik *(Ramachandra Vihar),* Purusottam Mandhata *(Sovabati),* Balavadra Bhramaravar *(Chhandaprava),* Rani Nisank Roy *(Padmabati Avilash,* Padmabati's Desires), Gangadhar Pattanaik *(Rasa Kalpalata),* Nilambar Bhanja *(Panchasayak,* Five Arrows), Jadumani Mahapatra *(Rukmini Vilas,* The Story of Rukmini; and *Raghunath Vilas,* The Story of Raghunath), Bharat Sena *(Sulochana Parinaya,* The Marriage of Sulochana; and *Suvadra Parinaya,* The Marriage of Suvadra), Bhubaneswar Kabichandra *(Vasudeb Vilas* and *Krushna Vilas),* Ladukeswar Mahapatra *(Adi Kavya)* and Ramachandra Pattanaik *(Harabati)* etc.

At the end, we may note a few Kavyas of different type, that is, of different subject matter, and also written in a different style, They are, *Khudurukuni Osa Katha* or *Taapoi Katha* by Gopinath Das, of the 16th century; *Sola Pala* (Sixteen Palas) by Kabi Karna of the 17th century; and *Dardhyata Bhakti Rasamruta* (The Stories of Steady Devotion) by Rama Das; *Chaurasi Ajnan* (Eighty-Four Commands) by Sudarsan Das; and *Samara Tarang* (The Tides of War) by Brajanath Badajena, all of 18th century. *Khudurukuni Osa Katha* is a brief account, in 5 small cantos, of a popular festival in Orissa, conducted by unmarried girls in the month of *Bhadrav* (August). The festival in fact, is a worship of mother-goddess (*Mangala*) in the premises of homes, where the *Osa Katha* is read out or sung, invoking the blessings of the goddess for future happiness of young ladies. The story of *Osa Katha,* written in simple language, in conversational speech, and in *Bhagabat* metrical arrangement, withqut any embellishment, has a social context, and refers to the plight of a young girl when her

brothers (*Sadhabas*) left abroad in their ships for trade, and how finally her plight was remedied by worshipping Mother *Mangala* (*Khudurukuni,* the goddess who loves small fragments of *rice-Khuda*) and the return of the brothers. The story has singularities, in the sense that it is different from the usual love-motivations of the traditional Kavyas, and secondly, it has social bearings that, though referred to 16th century Orissa, have many familiar strands even today, and thirdly, its reference to the sea-borne trade of ancient Orissa has a strong nostalgic element. An interesting example is when the wives of the *Sadhabas* requested them to bring ornaments for them when they return :

Oh, my bangle should have eight jewels around, one said,
Oh, get golden bangles for me, another said,
Oh, my jewel-bracelet should have sapphires in knots
And there should be a diamond in the middle
Shining from a distance, still another said.

Their requests were many, an indication of general affluence due to trade.

Sola Pala, on the other hand, is a collection of 16 stories, that involve different situations and characters, but related to the propagation of one divine being who brings good turns to the devotees. The stories have been narrated with a good mix of Bengali words and conjugations which the poet Kabi Karna, who belonged to north of Orissa, particularly to Midnapur district of West Bengal, appears to have done it deliberately, to achieve a wide circulation among both his Oriya and Bengali readers. The stories that are either read or sung at the time of puja or worship related to specific occasions, are suitably adjusted to the occasions. The stories are told graphically, with a view to teach morals and to propagate God's immense powers to do good . On the other hand they also inculcate a sense of discipline, religiousness and

devotion in the minds of the readers, listeners and worshippers. The divine being worshipped is Satyanarayan, who is also, like the mix of Oriya and Bengali language, a good mix of Hindu and Muslim religiousness. Thus the very first *Pala,* named *Janma Pala* or Birth-Pala, which is sung on the occasion of birth anniversaries, particuarly of children, runs as follows :

Oh, you all brothers, listen to the Lord's story
So whatever you do would end happily.
Oh, listen all, friends, and companions,
All the glories of Satyapir Saheb -
One day *Khoda* (God) sitting divinely in the sky
Spoke of taking birth in the world out of fun -
My actions spread everywhere, heaven, earth, nether worlds,
But I am a *Phakir* (beggar) in the world
And I do good always to poor people,
I come to Orissa as Sri Jagannath
And I bring Hindus and Muslims together, as one.

Sola Pala is an extraordmary account, told in simple language, racily, in full devotion, with a view to achieve Hindu-Muslim amity and companionship at a time, in the 17th century, when because of continuous influx of the Muslims into the social structure, it has been a crying need of the time.

Dardhyata Bhakti or *Drudha* Bhakti, which literary means steady or unflinching devotion, distantly resembles *Sola Pala,* in the sense that like the latter, it has also a frame of devotion, and it is also a collection not of stories promoting the glories of God, but biographical details of people who had unflinching devotion to their own truth of living and to gods. It was written towards the later part of the 18th century, in two parts, in 1768 and 1800 and contained a total 48 biographical accounts of *bhaktas* or devoted people taken from mythological accounts as well as from real life.

Its writer Rama Das was born in a Brahmin family at Dura, a village near Berhampur town in the Ganjam district. There were a few earlier biographical works in Oriya before Rama Das's book. They were *Jagannath Charitamruta* (Biographical Account of Jagannath Das) by Dibakar Das, written in the early part of the 17th century, and *Sri Chaitanya Bhagabat* by Iswar Das, written in the later part. Even almost contemporary to *Dardhyata Bhakti,* there was *Chaurasi Ajnan,* a biographical account with realistic as well as miraculous references to Jasobanta Das, the Bhakti poet. *Dardhyata Bhakti* is a popular book, in popularity almost akin to Jagannath Das's *Bhagabat,* and also written in Bhagabat-metre, in simple, conversational speech, without any ornamentation, but with pithy, telling comparisons taken from familiar day to day life in order to drive in the points. The purposes; like that of earlier *Sola Pala* were to make people aware of the lives of ideal people so that they can shape their lives accordingly, and pursue a path of devotion, religion and truth. A few extracts from one of the early stories entitled *Dinabandhu Das Sambad* would be interesting. Dinabandhu was a common Brahmin in the village and he and his family members pursued a life of benevolence and truth. When tested, they speak of worldly links as follows. First, Dinabandhu himself - "Das said, what should I say to you Oh Lord/ Who is whose son, who is whose father/ It's like a mango-tree in bloom/ Many flowers drop down while in bud/ Many others just drop down/ Some others stay till they ripe and fall/ Does the tree ever follow them ?". Then his wife - "When a potter shapes pots through his wheel/Many form into a shape/ Many break down/ Does the potter worry/ I am like a potter, everything God's creation/ Why should I worry ?". When at the end, when the dead son got back his life, and was asked about the worldly links, he said :

Who is whose father mother

Who is whose brother companion
Who is whose wife
Who is whose husband,
This is a world of lies
Nobody belongs to nobody.
Like a tree in summer where travellers gather -
Five or fifty moving and they see a tree
They all come together, sit, as if one home,
When time comes they go, the tree remains where it is,
This world is like that, bound to each other on nothing.

Dardhyata Bhakti meant to influence people on manners, habits and character which it eminently did through accounts of people who lived in truth and devotion.

Samara Tarang, as the title shows, was an account of a war, and to that extent different from the traditional Kavyas written at the time. The writer Brajanath Badajena (1730 - 1800) belonged to Dhenkanal, an ex-State area, now a district, and the Kavya narrates the war which Trilochana Mahindra Bahadur, the then King of Dhenkanal, fought against the then Marahatta Subedar of Orissa, Rajaram Pandit, in 1781. Additionally, there is also an account of another war, which the King of Keonjhar waged against Dhenkanal. In the first war the Marahatta Subedar could not defeat the King Mahindra Bahadur and a truce was effected. In the second war the King of Keonjhar was defeated. It is said that Brajanath wrote this book in praise of the King, with a view to get some benefits from the King. Whatever that may be, *Samara Tarang* was the third book after *Chandi Purana* and *Kanchi Kaveri,* but first clearest exposition of war and details of a battle in ancient and medieval Oriya literature, and remains the only such book so far. Brajanath belonged to an ancient cultured family, and himself quite cultured - a poet, a painter, an artist, well-versed in Sastras,

including music, astrology, grammar and religious scriptures. He also knew many languages, including Sanskrit, Prakrit, Hindi, Bengali and Telugu, in addition to Oriya, and composed works in those languages. Apart from *Samara Tarang*, the poet's other works include such books as, *Ambika Vilas* dealing with the marriage of Shiva and Parvati, *Gopi Vilas*, *Shyam Rasochhava*, *Keli Kalanidhi*, and a Hindi book *Gundicha Suda* etc. and a hilarious prose composition, almost like a Kavya, *Chatura Vinod* (Four Entertainment).

Samara Tarang has 7 cantos. It begins with a prayer to Lord Jagannath, and then goes over to give an account of Dhenkanal, the poet's own place, the glories of the royal family, and many virtues of King Trilochana Mahindra Bahadur. Then it narrates how, because the King did not pay his dues to the Marahattas, the then rulers of Orissa, the Marahatta ruler made an attack on Dhenkanal, but was defeated, and the Marahatta soldiers returned to Cuttack to wait till the end of rains. The second canto narrates in detail the preparation of the Marahatta soldiers for the next war with Dhenkanal. The third and fourth cantos describe the war with all its ferocious details. In the fifth canto the proposals for truce were advanced and executed. In the sixth, the warring sides meet in reconciliation, but the King of Keonjhar makes a sudden attack and is repulsed. In the seventh the poet goes back to the King and makes references to his own situation. Thematically *Samara Tarang* has two levels, one, an impersonal one, towards war preparations and war. The second is a personal one, the poet's personal and emotional attitudes, as well as his feelings about the King and to what extent the King could provide support to a man of letters. Stylistically too, it has two levels, one related to Upendra Bhanja, an inclination towards embellishment, ornamentation and rhetorical devices. But the second is a movement towards common

speech, direct and simple in structure, with a mix-up of Oriya words with non-Oriya (Arabic, Parsee, Hindi etc.) words. Thus the style combines an apparent rough and unevenness with, a hidden strength of smothness. This is how, the poet describes the preparation of the Marahatta army and their march - an account which is detail-specific as well as imbued with a sense of fun :

The whole army got ready
The supervisors stood in attendance,
The horse-riders, the Sardars, the Jamadars
All came as per their position
Recorded their presence and got orders.
Somebody rides an Arabian horse
The coloured-shirt shows beautifully on the body,
The shield on the left hand, the spear on the right
And the red turban flutters on the head.
Somebody rides a Kachhi horse
And leads two more in hand
As if it will fly over the earth at a wink.
Somebody rides a Turkey horse
Holds the shield and the spear tightly.
The moustache twined round the ears
And the long beard flows in the wind.
Somebody rides an Iranian horse
However one tries, it's always restless
Hisses through the mouth, the legs like lightening
The rider whistles and pats on its back.

....

Like a river in the rains
They flowed through roads and marshes
Not a single tree or creeper remained in ten miles,
Their legs dashed against mountains

And reduced them to earth,

And as they drank

The water in all tanks and rivers dried up,

And not a single stone remained safe on the way.

Brajanath Badajena was a well-known scholar and a versatile writer. His writings had special distinction, and were much appreciated by readers. Yet he could not get sufficient royal patronage, not even from the King of Dhenkanal whom he showed in a very favourable light in *Samara Tarang.* He had to move from place to place and explore as many ways as he could to eke out a living. In this his condition was at par with many other writers of Orissa's past. The uncertain, indifferent and chaotic conditions for about 300 years, had its toll on writers and sensitive people of Orissa. Yet, in spite of all that, Oriya creative spirit sprouted in abundance and was marked by remarkable achievements from time to time, of which Brajanath was one of the late examples.



7

POEMS, SONGS AND LYRICS

(*i*)

The Kavyas occupied, so to say, the centre-space in ancient Oriya literature. But poems, long and short ones, as well as songs and lyrics, variously motivated, and also on various topics and in various styles, came to be written as copiously as the Kavyas all through the period, beginning from the 16th century onwards, and also achieved quite a good deal of popularity. They were almost always written in simple, common speech, without much embellishment, on themes socially, mythologically and religiously familiar to people, and always with a fine flair for music. The net result was that such pieces came to be easily acceptable by the people, and were conveniently remembered and sung. We noted such short poetical compositions, that is, *Kalasa Chautisa* and *Kesaba Koili,* also written in the form of a Chautisa, at the time of Sarala Das. The writing of such pieces came to be more frequent from the 16th century onwards, and came to a great substantiality in the 17th and 18th centuries. Prof. Bansidhar Mohanty and Prof. Janaki Ballav Mohanty made some pioneering and seminal studies in the area, and particularly the latter compilied and edited the first important anthology of such pieces, entitled *Odia Geeti Kavya Sankalana* (Anthology of Oriya Songs and Lyrics) which was published by Orissa Sahitya Akademi, in 1977.

As per subject-matter or thematically, these short compositions have some broad similarities. First of all, a very large number of them deal with *bhakti,* that is, direct prayers to gods and goddesses, or developing a devotional motivation for them, or away from any particular divine being, establishing a meditational frame of mind, to meditate on the links between the

human and divine factors, or meditating on the ways of improving human factors. They are popularly known as *janana* and *bhajan,* and we have already noted how they formed a significant part of the 16th century Bhakti literature. But the motivation and involvement continued even after the 16th, and that too, quite profusely and powerfully, with the difference that the emphasis shifted more towards *Janana*, that is, greater attention was given towards submitting prayers and devotion to gods, than meditating on spiritual issues. Sri Jagannath was the particular deity to whom most of the compositions were directed. Secondly,.the other broad similarity can be seen in the themes of love, and an equally large number of poems testify to that. It has different dimensions. First of all, quite a number of them, particularly songs, celebrate man-woman relationship, the physical contact, attachment and union etc., along with mental interest and anxiety for each other. The context is variably social and familial, almost at par with what we have noted in many Kavyas. Secondly, as in the Kavyas again, the context changes to mythology, to Radha-Krushna stories, the details of their love-relationship conceived in human terms, along with an implicit element of divinity. This Radha-Krushna theme took up a still another dimension in consonant with the *Padabali* poems of Bengal. At least two major poets, Kavisurya Baladev Rath and Gopalkrushna Pattanaik, both belonging to 18th-19th centuries, along with Banamali Das (18th) and Gauracharan Adhikari and Gaurahari Parichha, both early 19th, concentrated on Radha-Krushna relationship as a self-contained area, did not view that from a distance as many other poets did, but identified themselves with one or the other of the pair, and achieved a rare intensity of love's joys sorrows, and where the human and divine factors completely amalgamated.

But as per form, the compositions took different forms, quite varying forms in a way, depending on popularly available forms, where language and metrical structures, as well as arrangement of

words and stanzas, varied from group to group. Though a general desire was to stick to available, familiar forms, yet to some extent linguistic experiments were carried out in adopting them. These forms were, to name a select few - 1) *Chautisa,* 2) Koili, or message poem 3) *Chaupadi,* 4) *Boli,* 5) *Sodasa,* 6) *Chitau* or letter-songs, 7) *Poi,* 8) *Champu,* 9) *Baramasi,* 10) *Soka* Gita or songs of sorrow, and 11) *Mangala Gita* or songs on auspicious occasions. All these forms were used by different poets at different times, depending on their necessity and occasion, though in the popularity-scale, two forms, *Chautisa* and *Chaupadi* emerged as the two most popular forms. The difference was that whereas *Chaupadi* mostly remained confined to emotional matters of love, *Chautisa* had a pervasiveness, and took all types of subject-matter within its ken. These include, beginning from motivations of prayer and devotion, of separation and union in love, to sending a message, or describing an event or a situation, or giving accounts of rhetorical devices usually adopted by poets, or communicating melancholic or sorrowful emotions, or even moralistic detached attitudes towards life as well as discoursing on spiritual ideas and knowledge. To list even the names of select-writers who wrote in *Chautisa*-form, would be like a roll-call of honour of important ancient writers. Beginning from *Kalasa Chautisa* in the 15th century, we come over to such writers as Balaram, Achyuta and Jagannath etc. in the 16th, to Bishnu Das, Dhananjoy Bhanja, Danei Das, Banamali Das, Dinabandhu Raj Harichandan, Bhupati Pandit and Raghunath Raj Harichand etc. in the 17th, and to such writers as Dinakrushna Das, Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma, Upendra Bhanja, Avimanyu, Bhaktacharan and Kavisurya Baladev Rath etc. in the 18th century usually considered as the 'golden' period for the *Chautisa* writting, finally to even Gauracharan Adhikari and Bhima Bhoi in the 19th The emphasis varied from spiritual expositions and devotion to love and to Puranic accounts, including accounts of Rama and Krushna.

It would be pertinent at this point to list some well-known *Chautisas* and *Koili* poems that were framed like *Chautisas,* in the pattern of letters of Oriya alphabet-serial. They are - *Kesaba Koili,* the first-ever *Koili* poem, that is addressed to 'Koili' or Cuckoo, and depicts Jasoda's laments at the departure of Krushna for Mathura, by Markand Das; *Kanta Koili,* that depicts Sita's laments on the occasion of her abduction by Ravana; and *Kamal Lochana Chautisa,* devotional prayer to 'lotus-eyed' Sri Hari, by Balaram Das; *Chitta Arata Chautisa,* also prayer to Sri Hari in a worried mind, by Achyutanand; *Chhanda Chautisa,* also prayer to Sri Hari, depicting his powers and actions in a submissive mood, by Bhaunri Das; *Milan Chautisa,* on Radha-Krushna love, Radha's companion reportihg to Krushna of Radha's plight in love, by Arjun Das ; *Rasakullya Chautisa,* depicting love negotiation between Radha and Krushna, and their union at the end, by Damodar Das; *Sakuntala Chautisa,* describing the meeting of Dushmant with Sakuntala and the beginning of their love, by Raghu Arakshita; *Baramasi Koili,* depicting Kausallya's agony for Rama in banishment in the forest and his ordeals as the seasons change, by Sankar Das; and *Bira Simha Chautisa* that describes spiritual concepts related to body and how one can attain transcendence through an understanding of that, by Bira Simha - all beginning from Achyutananda belonging to the 16th century; *Chandramukhi Chautisa,* giving an account of love emotion, of the lover to lady-love, expressing fear of separation, by Bishnu Das; and *Jnanodaya Koili,* depicting spiritual knowledge about the factors of human body comparable to that given in *Bira Simha Chautisa,* by Nathia Lokanath - both belonging to the 17th century; then *Janaki Smaran Chautisa,* depicting Rama's sorrow on being separated from Sita at Mallyavanta hills, by Dinakrushna Das; *Kolahala Chautisa* describing Radha's plight in love being reported to Krushna and Krushna's submission and their final union, by Shyamsundar Bhanja; *Duti Chautisa* describing Radha's strong anxiety for love

of Krushna and a request to her companion (*Duti*) to arrange for their union, which is done, by Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma; and *Kalakalebar Chautisa,* describing Krushna's entry into Mathura, Krushna's immense attractiveness and the reaction of Mathura's women, and *Manabodha Chautisai* about life's uncertainties in a moralistic devotional frame by Bhaktacharan Das, all of the 18th century. Prof. B. Mohanty thought that a study of *Chautisa* would be a complete study of ancient Oriya poetry - they were so numerous and so full of varieties. Prof. Mohanty was largely correct, *Chautisa* did not just stay as a mere formalistic structure. It assumed a character, an identity, and almost a motivation, an attitude, and mind-set of the ancient Oriya writers.

(*ii*)

The legacy of the 16th century Bhakti literature continued quite strongly in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and the poets were generally inclined to write poems of prayer and devotion. In most of these cases the focal point was Sri Jagannath and the mood was invariably worshipful, asking for the Lord's protection and support through the adversities of life and associating one's actions and activities with the Lord. Allied to this there were two other strains, not as strong as this, yet quite effective in a way, and both had their origins in the 16th century. One grew out of the meditative pieces on human life and human factors, that is, the *bhajanas* which the Panchasakha poets like Achyuta, Jasobanta and Ananta wrote, where the fragileness of human life was scrutinized again and again, and religious faith and religious awareness were advocated as counter to that. The second was associated with contemporary Vaishnavite tradition and Vaishnavite ideas, where Sri Krushna's many activities were taken up as implicit divine activities and appropriate respect and devotion was paid to all that.

The prayer and an obeisance to Sri Jagannath began almost from the beginning, that is, from Sarala Das, and was eagerly taken

up by Balaram, Jagannath and Achyuta etc. who came immediately after him - no doubt a sign of national pride that the nation was developing round Sri Jagannath. For all of them Sri Jagannath was the Supreme God, the-Creator and Saviour of all. Jagannath Das's reference to the Lord was significant *(Namaste Prabhu Jagannath)* :

The world is your play-ground
You create all illusions,
Your breathing is wind
All gods are born out of it ....
The Eternal Figure came from your arms
And Goddess Saraswati from your throat,
You are perpetually restless
You never sleep
You inhabit in Nothingness.

Subsequently devotion to Sri Jagannath continued as a strong current and the poets often made references to the Lord's great powers and beauty, and showed an attitude of great devotion and submissiveness. One of the greatest exponents of this devotion to Lord Jagannath and probably the most well-known in this respect, whose poems of prayer have become justly famous for their fine compositional as well as musical values, was Salbeg, a 17th century Muslim poet (father Muslim, mother a Hindu Brahmin widow). His songs are mostly submissions to Lord Jagannath, which have on the one hand, a simple joy, and on the other, a simple intensity, for which they have been immensely appreciated by the devotees. Thus the God is praised for his great beauty :

Look at him from behind Garuda
See how the lotus-face glows with beauty,
The diamonds and gems burn like fire
And the diamond-chain hangs from the neck...

(Ahe Nilagiri. Ho Blue Hill)

He is prayed to provide succour to his devotees:

Oh, you Great Rogue of the Blue Hills
Trample my sorrows under your feet
As you trample a forest of lotus...

(*Ahe Nilasaila.* Oh, Blue Mountain)

And he is reminded that he lives only for his devotees:

You live only for your devotees, Oh Lord,
You bear the signs of Conch and Wheel only for him,
He is your father, mother, he is your friend,
For his good alone
You bear the name of Krupasindhu (The Sea of Mercy).

(*Eka To Bhakata Jibana,* Life only for the Devotee)

Therefore the devotee's prayer to Sri Jagannath is not for this or that, any material gain or wealth :

Oh, Lord, I don't ask for anything,
I am not asking for men
Nor I ask for wealth
What I ask for is a cubic foot from the sand you love,
My eyes don't long for anything else
Except to see you
My ears don't receive any other sound
Except that which tells of you.

(*Jagannath He,* Oh Lord Jagannath)

Dinakrushna Das, the famous poet, begins his great Kavya *Rasa Kallol* with a prayer to Lord Jagannath that describes the Lord's great beauty and charm and the great satisfaction that brings to the devotee ("The lotus-face brings immense happiness/ And the dark retina is like a bee sucking/ The golden pendant flashes in the forehead..."). Elsewhere too, in a poem entitled *Jaya Jaya Jagannath* (Oh, Victory to Jagannath) he speaks of the Lord's great beauty :

The chain of jewels appear floating,
The sapphire ear-drums on both ear-lobes,
The nine-jewel medal hangs on the breast,

The sapphire bangles show in both the hands...

But the Lord has his own playfulness too, and the devotee feels hurt at the Lord's apparent unconcern. Thus, he tries to reason out in a bid to expose the Lord's failings, as in Dinakrushna's famous *Artatrana Janana* (Prayer to Alleviate Suffering) :

Oh, Lord
Being yourself the Sea of Mercy
How you couldn't have pity on a luckless man ?
Oh, tell me, tell me, Bhabagrahi, why is it so ? ...
I feel so strange
He who has all wealth
Who is served by Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth
On seeing whose face all sorrows vanish -
How is it being his slave
I am a beggar, Oh, Lord ?
On hearing this
People of the fourteen worlds feel amazed.
It's not a fiction, Oh, Lord,
Oh great Lord of the Blue Hills.

Kavisurya Baladev Rath, a major poet of later 18th and early 19th century, in a fine poem entitled *Jagannath Janana* (Prayer to Lord Jagannath) also wrote of direct submission of the devotee to the Lord. But at the same time the poet developed an implicit bantering tone which brings the submission to a larger focus and sharpness, as in the first stanza :

Your are the life's friend
Of the Princess of the Sea of Milk,
You are the Lord of the Universe,
And you have raised the banner of equal treatment,
Yet, Oh, God, why - Why this partiality ?
Somebody did something
Which I didn't do,
Or somebody, gave away something

Which I didn't give,
Is that the reason, Oh, Lord,
Is that why, I am put to such strain ?

The poet continued this bantering, witty submission in another famous poem of his, entitled *Sarpa Janana* (Prayer to the Snake) which is a prayer not to Lord Jagannath alone but to a combination of Jagannath,Vishnu and Krushna. The God is conceived here as a Snake that drinks wind, and he is reputed to be such a person who could destroy his own house and could kill his own kith and kin :

Does it hurt you, O husband of *Rama* ?
Then please excuse me,
Or please wait a while
I will today scold you to my heart's fill.
Oh Lord, Oh Lord of Mercy, Oh Jagannath,
The wise men are afraid of you
And call you Sea of Mercy,
You are in fact the Great Snake of Time
And you swallow all
All souls, like wind
Oh, God of Mercy ?

The poet is angry and hurt, but the anger sublimates in complete surrender at the end - "Oh, Sea of Mercy, I am your slave/ Know this, and consider...". In fact respect to Sri Jagannath was pervasive and apart from the poets we have referred to, there were many other poets who were instinctively drawn towards the Lord. They include, beginning frorm Madhabi Dasi in the 16th century, to such persons as Raghu Arakshita (16th), Rasananda Nabaghana Chand (17th), Saria Vika (17th), Upendra Bhanja, Arta Das (18th), Banamali (18th), Birakeshari Dev (18th), Brajanath Badajena (18th), Shyamsundar Bhanja (18th), Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma (18th) and Avimanyu (18th) etc. and many more. The poems of prayer, particularly to Sri Jagannath, was an almost continuous

preoccupation with the poets, to the extent that very minor poets who were otherwise unknown, became famous for one or two songs of prayer. Such persons were Saria Vika and Chandan Hajuri, and the popular poems were *Thaka mana Chala Jiba* (Oh, the Tired Mind Let's Go) and *Chaka Nayanaku Patita Kehi* (Some Fallen Man to the Round-Eyed) respectively. In fact, in spite of variations and tension which emotions provide, these poems were characterized by a sense of strong devotion and submission. and upheld the invisible yet intense link between the devotee and his God in a worshipful mood, and in a mental condition of joy and happiness.

In this connection two *Chautisas*, one each by Bhanuri Das and Bira Simha, both of the 18th century, and two by Bhaktacharan Das of the same century, may be considered to some extent. Bhanuri's is named *Chanda Chautisa.* The poem is addressed to 'Hari (Sri Hari) as a refrain, and combines devotional motivation with an intellectual understanding to the extent of divinity. On the one hand the poet speaks of God's goodness ("Oh. Lord, how could you know my sorrow/And gave me wisdom to understand"), and his invisible existence everywhere ("Lord, you are eveywhere in the whole world/ Hidden like butter in milk."). On the other, he is the complete wisdom *(Chaubarga Jnani)* and is manifested in inprobabilities, "Like the full-moon on the new-moon day." But at the end the motivation is one of complete submission :

Lord. I leave all things
Rituals, worship, going on pilgrimages,
Lord, everything, everything I renounce
I seek protection only in your name.

The poem has a strong core of religiousness - a reflection of the 16th century's pervasive attitude towards religion and divinity. *Bira Simha Chautisa* which also belongs to the 16th century. puts emphasis on another aspect of the 16th century's religiousness. That is, instead of devotion and associated elements. it goes on to

give an intellectual analysis of spirituality, where the human body is penetrated to arrive at correct understanding. The poem begins with a direct reference to that :

Says Bira Simha, listen to the body's considerations
Time, Lotus, and Immaculate stay at one place
And the four colours - black, white, red and saffron.

Then goes on to elaborate on that,

The vortex of vertebral column
On sixteen small tabours,
At the top the area of Grace
Srihat Patna,
And in the spinal holes she resides
The Goddess.

And finally,

The Eternal Sleep of Sesha, the Divine Snake,
The Lotus of hundred petals blooms in glory
And the Primordial plays on the pollens of the Lotus.

As can be seen the religiousness is no longer a matter of instinct or emotion. It lies in an analysis of the process of spirituality, quite an important trend in the Bhakti tradition of the 16th century, where devotional motivation is implicit in the process.

But coming over to Bhaktacharan's two poems, two fine pieces of poetry, we come to a freer, more familiar, heart to heart communication. The first one *Kalakalebara Chautisa.* literarily the poetic account of the dark-skinned person, that narrates Krushna's entry into Mathura along with his brother, is an extremely pleasant piece of narration, both racy and open, with a strong devotional intent. First, the reference to an unexpected sight of great happiness - "Is it Ganga and Jamuna together dropping from the sky ?" and, "Is it the full-moon rising from the sea of milk ?". Then referencs to extraordinary activities - "Sucked the life of Putana along with milk", and, "In the midst of dense forest in the rains/ He the son of Nanda and Jasoda/ Lifted the hill in his

left hand." Then, references to beauty, attractiveness and telling effect on Mathura's young women as Krushna with his great attractiveness, both physical and otherwise, stepped into the streets of Mathura :

> What calamity for young women
> What plight wrought by destiny
> Like poison mixed with poison.
> Drops of sweat stream from his face
> Like God of Love scattering beads of anklets,
> Marks of sandal-paste on his forehead,
> And eye-brows on the eyes
> Like guns of the God of Love...
> Oh, the moon of Jadu clan, Jadubihari,
> Has taken our caste, youth, life, everything.

The devotion is neither implicit, nor explicit, it is in the environment, in the intent, and permeats the whole account. Bhaktacharan's second poem is a more interesting one - a rare one in a way. It is entitled *Manabodha Chautisa,* literary meaning, something that pleases the mind. It is neither a prayer for any divine being, or devotionally motivated towards one. But it speaks of religiousness as an essential part of life, and puts emphasis on a mindset that by itself grows to view the mortal coils with detachment, and contemplates how best it can avail a religious concentration as a bull-work to ephemeral earthly attachments and mortal adversities - a distant throw-back to Panchasakha attitudes, prescriptions for the man to go beyond his mortal agonies. First, a cruel reminder of what this so called life is, where the end is an inevitable 'end' after which nothing remains :

> The bones of your skeleton in pieces
> Would be eaten by dogs and jackals,
> And though you sleep on puffed beds
> Your body will smell foul when time comes,

....

You have earned whatever, call your home,
They will call you a ghost when your end comes,
Your wife would be exorcising her body
And your friends and relatives will go through purification.

....

Like a drum that sounds loudly
Your body is, there is nothing inside,
Everything becomes a lie when you totter and fall.

This is one aspect, The other aspect is a refrain - a refrain to concentrate on things beyond, that never submit to ephemerality, and shine as a succour, manifested in a contemplation of divinity :

Oh mind listen to me, let's go,
And look at the dark graceful face.
If to be rescued from the sea of life
Find out ways, meditate on Sri Guru.

... ...

Don't be cheated when time comes
Go and serve your Guru

... ...

Your skin covers eighty four exits
Attend to Him who resides in the Blue Hill.

... ...

Once born one is sure to die
Meditate on Sri Hari, you are sure to live.

... ...

Pray to Hari happily
Don't be ashamed in the mire of the world
All is lie, except the name of Hari

And like a true Vaishnav, the poet veers round to Sri Krushna :

Chant the name of Sri Krushna
Meditate on the lotus-feet of Sri Krushna
Give your heart to Sri Krushna's lotus-feet.

The poem combines two levels, one, references to the mortalities that sorround life, the other to meditation and contemplation. *Manabodha Chautisa* is a rare poem, that combines attitudes towards life with a need of religiousness and all in a social and familiar dimension.

(*iii*)

We have noted how love had a strong thematic presence in the Kavyas and how the writers took pleasure in elaborating many of its aspects. In poems and songs too it was quite a strong element and as in the Kavyas, here too, it diversified into two channels, direct man-woman relationship, and indirectly through Radha-Krushna frame, and both the channels developed from the beginning. *Chandramukhi Chautisa* by Bishnu Das (16th-17th) is a fine, early example,of direct man-woman love. The poem is in *raga Kamodi* and 'Chandramukhi' literary meaning the face like the moon, refers to the lady whose face is as beautiful as the face of the full moon. The poem is an address of the lover to the lady-love, who apprehending separation, goes through a strong emotion of love, re-lives many of the details of his love-companionship with the lady, and feels crestfallen thinking of his impending plight in separation. First, the excitement at the physical attraction of the lady :

> My body becomes inert
> When your thighs and breasts show through thin cloth,
> And the God of Love strikes me at the opportune hour
> Makes me senseless.

Then the mental restlessness and anxiety :

> Oh, lotus-eyed lady, I say it for truth,
> If I don't get your embrace even for a moment .
> My life would not be there, O dearest,
> How cruel that would be,
> Oh, lotus-eyed lady, my eye's treasure,

Even a wink like ages to me

My nights never end without you.

Dinabandhu Raj Harichandan (17th), Dhananjoy Bhanja (17th), Upendra (17th-18th), Brajanath Badajena (18th) and Jadumoni Mahapatra (18th) etc. were all variously motivated by love, by the youthful contact between the lover and the lady-love, and emotions of anxiety, restlessness and excitement thereto. Thus Dinabandhu Raj narrates the lover's agony thinking what would have been the plight of the lady in separation :

How my dear lady would be now without me

How she would be spending her days and nights

How she would have been sad sitting alone

How her moments would have been many ages....

There would be no show of betel on her lips

No show of new flowers on her tresses

O that jewel of a woman must have left her bedstead

Must have fallen on earth without sense.

(*Ekala Mora,* Alone She)

Dhananjoy Bhanja remembers past encounters with the lady - a memory of sensuous details :

How you used to come smilingly, swingingly

Will I ever see that again.

One day I leant and kissed your eyes

You said a riddle and put your arms round my neck,

I rubbed a red stone and painted your breasts,

The pretentious God of Love reminds me that

And takes away my wit.

(*Dhali Dhali,* Swingingly)

Upendra Bhanja's awareness of love has many facets. It can be sheer physical excitement:

O heavy-haired one,

What a picture you make

When you return from love-making !...

The paintings on your breasts are blurred
You walk unsteadily, half-asleep,
The tight-knot of your cloth is loose
You try to pull it up so,
Your golden body shines with sweat
Your sandal-paste shows in patches,
Your hairs are loose
Streaming below the waist...

(*Ghana Kesi,* O *heavy-haired*)

Or the amazing figure of the lady that stunned the lover when he returned from afar :

O my lazy beauty !
It was the end of a moonlit night
When I returned from afar,
And alone with the lady
I told her all my sorrows...
Her tresses of hair were open
She had no attendant
Her clothes had slipped to her waist
She glanced about wildly,
I saw her for a moment
I was stunned... *(Are Madalasa,* O Lazy Beauty)

Or, the rise of sudden passion when a youthful lady is seen in the street :

The red-lipped woman seized my heart
Whose woman is she, so newly out in the street ?
Her slow walk puts the walk of the elephant to shame.
Her beauty shines like a polished diamond
Can a fairy be equal to her ? ...

(Ramani Se *Kahara,* Whose Woman)

Differently, the separation puts both the lover and the lady-love in great agony. First the lover :

The sleep never comes at night

The days don't make me hungry
The tears streaming from my eyes all exhausted
Wherever I look I only see you,
O my clever woman...

(*Khyata Moha Para,* Known Like Me)

Then the lady :

O without him, my friend,
The days and nights have become like million ages...
The clothes weigh heavily
So all my ornaments,
See, see my friend, this hot wind
Like the weapon of love
Takes my life away....

(*Kanhi Se Rahila,* Where is He)

Brajanath Badajena's long poem *Bidesh Anuchinta* (Thoughts from Afar) also dealt with separation in love. - a youngman re-living his past associations with the lady-love in a melancholic memory. But Jadumoni's poems were like Upendra Bhanja's, sharp expositions of intense emotion. Thus this is how he viewed the lady with a desire he cannot express :

Oh, my heavy-breasted one,
How I long for her !
The arrows of her eyes pierced me
And my life burnt unceasingly.
She turned her moonlike face and smiled.
I could not walk, I swooned...

(*Nohe Kahirei,* Can't Say)

Elsewhere, he repents why at all he left the lady when she was so unwilling to leave him :

Ah, what did I do !
I lost my sense knowingly,
The lady had flowers all over
Her every word dropped honey

And she pleaded so much at my feet
Not to leave her...
A great pity, I could not spend the night
With my lady in my lap,
Oh, how could I leave her so !

As we noted, this happens to be one trend of love in ancient poems and songs - a direct man-woman relationship, going through various levels of emotion, from happiness, joy, and excitement to agonies in separation and uncertainties of love-making etc. The other trend, expression of love through Radha Krushna association has also been equally intense,

Milan Chautisa, suggesting the love-union between Chandrabati and Krushna, by Arjun Das, was one of the earliest poems that graphically describes the love-relationship between the pair, where Chandrabati's companion reports to Krushna about the plight of lady in love, and pleads for their union which is made effective at the end. Thus this is how the lady's plight in love is described :

She laughs intermittently and cries
When she comes back to senses she looks for signs,
Like a young doe hurt by an arrow
She will long for you and leave her life.

... ...

She closes her eyes and again opens them
She talks and laughs like a mad woman,
She prattles privately to friends and others
Please Kesaba, have pity, save her life.

... ...

She can never sit upright
Her breasts so tight don't permit that,
When one speaks she can't know
If you wink she never responds

But the reference to Chandrabati with Krushna is a rarity. The

love-lorn lady is almost always Radha, and the ancient songs and poems are full of her sorrows and joys. In another *Chautisa*, *Kolahala Chautisa* by Shyamsundar Bhanja, Radha's plight is similarly graphically described :

She breathes intermittently, heavily
She moans and loses her senses,
Sweats stream from her body every moment
And her hairs stand on end excitedly,
The arrows of the bodiless god
Pierce her beautiful lean body
And she has forgotten all things
How to play, laugh and talk
She does not eat, never moves around
She does not sleep, never makes her toilet,
She does not see anything with her eyes
Appears startled again and agatn,
Take, take me, O playful one, she moans,
And closes her eyes.

Salbeg, who wrote fine poems of prayer related to Lord Jagannath, also wrote equally fine poems related to Radha and Krushna. First, Radha's appreciation of Krushna's personality :

Oh, friend, how beautiful is Gopi's Lord !
The golden thread across shoulders
Bold sandal-paste on the forehead
And double line jewels round the neck,
Oh, my friend...

(*Ki Ago Mita,* Oh my Friend)

Secondly, Radha's restlessness of mind when she sees Krushna on the way :

I saw the King of Gods, under the Kadamba tree
I looked at him lazily and I was shy,
He shone like a still, new cloud
I lost my consience and forgot myself...

(*Dekhili Aji Go,* Saw Today)

And finally the call of the flute, when it came, was more than just a call of love. It was stunning, incredible and even changed the normal course of events :

O my friend, whose flute was that in the forest ?
The dry trees blossomed when they heard it
The wind stayed where it was, startled,
The stones melted, flowed like water
The Jamuna flowed upstream
And the fishes left water, jumped to the bank.
The small bells tinkled slowly
The knot of shame round the waist loosened
And there was no time even to put the clothes again...

(*Sakhi Kunjabane Benu,*
Oh Friend, the Fute in the Arbour).

Dinakrushna Das too, apart from *Rasa Kallol,* wrote a good number of poems related to love between Radha and Krushna. At one level, his Radha, like Salbeg's, is strongly conscious of Krushna's personality ("Stands crooked in three parts/ Smiles mildly/Hair bent in a design on the head/ Jewelled ears-rings in the ears/ Garland of flowers round the neck/ Yellow cloth round the waist..." etc.). At another level, Radha analyses her own sentiment of love, says that though she thought that she would be happy, she now burns in her own unhappiness where sorrows exceed joys, wonders who the fool imported the word 'love' *(Preeti)* that brings excessive joy in the beginning only : to kill at the end, and compares her condition with that of burning particles of iron in an iron-smith's foundry :

Oh, friend, I loved through pleasure
But what happened- I had only to cry,
I thought I would be happy,
But I had to wear the garland of sorrows,
I burnt myself in the fire of love.

My sorrows exceeded my pleasure,
Heats me, burns me, never leaves a particle
I burn as if in an iron-smith's foundry.

In this connection, we may further note two interesting poems of Dinakrushna. One is a small compact poem, extremely musical, and pinpoints the bodily love-union of Radha and Krushna through a series of images. The second, a slightly long piece, involving Radha, Krushna and the Gopis, describes a river in spate (a virtual reality created by Krushna) and narrates how Krushna took this opportunity to harass the ladies, out to sell their curd, in fording the river - the motivation all along being one of joy and love. Thus this is how in the first poem *(Jugala Milana,* The Pair's Union), the poet points out, in telling images, how the two colours, the blue of Krushna, and the white of Radha, got perfectly blended:

The clouds joined with lightening
And rained the juice of rain,
The bumble-bees stuck to champak flowers
And kissed that in great abandon,
The golden creeper entwined the *tamala* tree
And both fell down in wind,
The enemy of snakes (Garuda)
Danced merrily on golden earth,
And the spring-bird called and sang
Inside the emerald cage.

Similarly, in the second poem, entitled *Naba Keli* (The Boat-Game), the love motivation is hidden behind a river in spate and the intransigence of Krushna which the Gopis abuse in choicest language. The poem begins with the Gopis, including Radha, preparing curds at home and singing songs in adoration of Krushna, calling him with fond names, referring to his activities at Gopa, and marvelling at his divine dimension ("eternal giver of things", "killer of all worries", "the piller of compassion" etc.). At the next phase the Gopis come to Jamuna, with a view to cross it over

for going to Mathura to sell curd. In fact this is where the real game begins. To their amazement they find that the river which is normally dry is suddenly in spate. The description is graphic, almost as in modern parlance :

Water flows sharp, foams float in groups,
Water look red like bricks, the waves rise high,
Logs of wood go floating, snakes sit on that,
The crocodiles float in batches
Nobody can see the end, the whole looks fearsome...

The next phase is real fun. They detect an 'old' 'feeble' boatman in the river, who is willing to ferry them across only on his own terms, that is, Radha to be taken first. They placate him, and also abuse him :

Let snake eat your ears
Let ghost sit on your chest
Let you drown in the mid-stream
Let a crocodile eat you.

The narration is graphic, the dialogues are witty, the account exudes with a fine playfulness, and the end is pleasure and happiness, a give and take of love.

Both Upendra Bhanja and Avimanyu Samantsimhar, two other considerable poets, had each a number of poems devoted to the love of Radha and Krushna. Thus, for example, Upendra's famous song *Srimati Sripati Brundavane,* describes the love-union of Radha and Krushna :

Srimati and Sripati made love to each other at Brundavan
Under the beautiful trees of Brunadavan,
The youngman who fulfills all wishes
And the gem of a woman,
Had their love-dalliance in great excitement,
In ivory-white bed
In the mire of white sandal-paste
The woman with the face of a white swan

And he who holds the Sarong bow
Made love to each other in great abandon....

Differently, Avimanyu enumerates how the fascinating call of Krushna's flute influenced Radha, and provoked her intense love for him :

The flute plays again and again
How charmingly, O my friend,
In this forest
In this spring,
I miss my lover,
The birds call in the forest
The crow, the cuckoo and the magpie,
I wove a garland
With jasmine, *champa* and *nageswar,*
I kept awake at night
Waiting for him,
But he did not come
O my friend...
I have worn a thin saree
I wait for him smilingly,
I tell you I will hang myself,
This is my truth

(Ghana Ghana Banshi Swana,
Repeatedly the Flute Sounds)

Love has been a prime force with Oriya poets, and practically Radha-Krushna dimension provided them a very personal and forceful motivation. A slightly changed perspective can be noted as we move to such important poets as Kavisurya Baladev Rath, Gopalkrushna Pattanaik, and Banamali Das as well as Gauracharan Adhikari and Parichha. They all were mainly concerned with Radha-Krushna theme, with the difference that they had greater involvement and identification, almost at the personal level, than hitherto we have noted with the earlier poets.

Kavisurya Baladev Rath, poet, scholar, administrator, was born at Badakhemundi Garh, in the Ganjam district, sometime in the later part of the 18th century (probably in 1779), had a continuous itinerary administrative service in different States in the same district, at Jalantar, Athagarh, Parlakhemundi and Mahuri (Berhampur) etc., and died in about mid 19th (probably 1840). He was in good friendly terms with the kings of the States he served, many of whom were literary connoisseurs, and lived in good affluence, and earned reputation all around (even including the British administrators of the time) as a capable administrator, a great man of learning, and a remarkable poet. One of the kings, with whom he picked up life-long friendship, and who also continued as his life-long patron, was King Balunkesh Harichandan of Athagarh whom the poet has mentioned in many of his poems, and who was particularly associated with the composition of the poet's most famous and best work, *Kishor Chandrananda Champu,* and was instrument in the writing of the poet's most hilarious prose-composition, *Hasya Kallol* (The Waves of Laughter). The title 'Kavisurya', literary meaning the sun among the poets, was given to Baladev by the Jalantar's King Ramachandra Chhotray, which was later confirmed by the then Gajapati King of Puri, Mukunda Dev (who commanded greatest respect among all the kings of Orissa as the 'God-King' because of his association with Sri Jagannath), who also issued a royal edict *(sanand)* to him in 1815, authorizing certain services to Lord Jagannath, a rare and coveted honour at the time.

Baladev's first-ever work was a Kavya, entitled *Chandrakala,* which he composed while at Jalantar in the King's Court. It is said he undertook this work at the request of the King to celebrate the great beauty and grace of his adopted daughter Chandrakala, which, it is also said, left unfinished because the young lady died untimely. The Kavya was in 18 Chhandas

(chapters), and was largely modelled on Upendra Bhanja's famous Kavya *Lavanyabati,* though in language-use, style and range of description, it had its own specific originality. But at Jalantar the poet was also creatively productive in a different way. He was in the habit of composing and quite frequently too, poems and songs related to love, and man-woman relationship, many of which he dedicated to the King. The poems were short,written in a colloquial, conversational style invariably in a musical frame with incorporation of a *raga* and specific points of view. This is an area in which Baladev excelled, and where he continued to be productive throughout his life, and which brought him greatest reputation as a poet. The scholars name these as *Geetaballi*, which by a rough estimate number more than 500. Three collections of Kavisurya's such poems may be noted, by Pandit Kulamoni Das (1928), Kalicharan Pattanaik (1968) and K.C. Behera (1998). These include such groups of poems known as *Champu, Chhanda, Chautisa, Chaupadi, Janana, Bhajan, Chitau, Dhumpa* and *Manas,* etc. These can be divided into four thematic groups, that is, 1. those that deal with Radha-Krushna theme, 2. those that deal with love-relationship of common people, 3. those that are devotional in content, and 4. those else, that are given to humour. As we said, Baladev excelled in small poems or *Chaupadis*, and his *Geetabalis* as a whole contributed a very substantial part to ancient Oriya poetry.

Kishor Chandrananda Champu exhibited the poet's best talents. It was written while the poet was at Athagarh, in the King's Court, and it is said, he did so to satisfy the King's Vaishnavite faith. Stylistically *Champu* was a mix of poetry and prose, that is, poems followed by prose accounts, at least that was so in Sanskrit, Baladev picked up the style - a new venture in Oriya at that time - composed a group of 34 poems, as per the sequence of 34 Oriya consonants, the particular consonant being at the beginning of each line of the concerned poem (an ancient practice followed by Oriya

poets, including Dhananjoy and Upendra Bhanja etc. which they termed as *Chaupadi Bhusana*) followed by a prose version of the same poem in Sanskrit as also a poem in Sanskrit, both distantly echoing the meaning of the first Oriya poem. Why Baladev followed up his Oriya poems by renderings in Sanskrit is anybody's surmise, which might have been because of the greater dominance of Sanskrit at the time, or because Sanskrit carried greater respect among the scholars and by joining Oriya with Sanskrit the poet might have thought of providing similar respectability to his Oriya poems, or it was just a simple case of maintaining one's competence both in Sanskrit and Oriya. Whatever that may be, *Kishor Chandrananda Champu* is assessed by the group of 34 Oriya poems, which together institute a unique body of creative work. Baladev's model was *Gita Govind.* But at the same time the differences can also be noted. First of all, it is better framed, better organized, and the sequences are more logical. Secondly, *Gita Govind's* emphasis on love and physical union is more controlled in Kavisurya and more tastefully presented. Thirdly, it steers clear of *Gita Govind's* Vaishnavite motivation, and tries to present a devotion-free environment Lastly, its action and characters involved, have greater clarity, greater relevance, and larger humanness than would be seen in *Gita Govind* - a closer approach to reality and naturalness.

A distinctive feature of Baladev's writing, in which he was following a long established tradition, is to develop a continuous frame of musicality in whatever he wrote. That is, every piece that he wrote was to be adjusted to a particular metrical arrangement of a *raga.* This is most evident in *Kishor Chandranada Champu* where a variety of *ragas* have been provided along with their deviations, such as *Sabari*, *Kedar*, *Kamodi*, *Mukhabari*, *Bangalasri*, *Soma*, *Kaunda*, *Bhairabi*, *Purabi* and *Gauda* etc., which are not only adjusted to the theme, tone and motivation of every piece, but together create a wonderful atmosphere of music.

This, allied with the fact that all 34 poems of *Kishor Chandrananda Champu* are framed on dialogues and counter dialogues of only three characters, Radha. Krushna and Lalita, with strong mental tensions, go to make a complex structural arrangement, combining purposes, actions and situations at both physical and mental levels, in a total dramatic climate of song, dance and story. In fact, it may be pointed out that the poems of *Kishor Chandrananda Champu* have both strong visual and auditory appeals, and being on popular Radha-Krushna theme they are often sung and danced in the countryside by 'Gotipua' or 'Sakhinata' troupes, consisting of young boys dressed and acting as Krushna, Radha and Lalita.

Two distinguishing aspects of *Kishor Chandrananda Champu* relate first, to its theme, particularly the cohesiveness of the theme, and secondly, important roles played by Lalita in advancing and organizing the action of the story. The theme relates to love - its emergence, growth and fruition, and to what extent, and with what cleverness and one-mindedness, the whole process of its growth and fruition has been nourished and maintained. Radha and Krushna, severally and together, through their anxiety and eagerness as well as suspicion, hesitation and truthfulness, constituted the main part of the growth, and Lalita, through her cleverness, manoeuvrability, steadiness and dedication played the part of nourishing, and could see the happy ending. The theme has two levels, one is mental which is expressed throughout in the various reactions related to joy, sorrow and happiness of the two main characters, Radha and Krushna. The other is physical, which is implied all throughout, and only comes to the fore at the end. Lalita plays the crystalizing role for both, and at the same time tosses both the themes at her will and resolves them with a masterstroke at the end that satisfies all, Radha and Krushna, Lalita herself, and all their companions. It is said Lalita dominates *Kishor Chandrananda Champu*. It is largely correct. If *Kishor Chandrananda Champu* is to be conceived as a drama, because

of its strong propensities towards dramatic elements, such as dialogue, action and conflicting tensions etc.., then Lalita combines the role of a clever director with the roles of alter egos of the main characters. Because of her it becomes easy to assess the intensity of love between Radha and Krushna, and again, because of her, their mutual attraction for each other becomes deeper, becomes more substantial and ends in the perfection of union. *Kishor Chandrananda Champu* has a third level, which grows out of it and at the same time remains detached, hinted only at two points, in the Sanskrit sloka *(Mangalacharan)* at the beginning, and in the last Oriya song *(Kshya)* at the end, of devotional intent, a prayer to Radha and Krushna *(Radhamadhav),* and a diffidence that how can a poet, being a human being of small intelligence, describe the indescribable union of immaculate Lustres of *Prakruti* and *Purusha* - Radha and Krushna.

Apart from *Kishor Chandranand Champu,* Baladev had two other Champu sequences entitled *Ratnakar Champu* and *Premodaya Champu* which were otherwise called *Chaupadi Ratnakar* and *Chaupadi Chandrodaya* respectively, both of which were probably written earlier than *Kishor Chandrananda Champu.* But it was in *Kishor Chandrananda Champu* as well as a number of independently written Chaupadis on love that Baladev's greatest reputation was made. A few examples would be pertinent. The first poem of *Kishor Chandrananda Champu* (*Ka* poem) in *raga Sabari,* addressed to Lalita, is an expression of Radha's restlessness of mind, when one day suddenly she saw Krushna at a distance on the bank of Jamuna :

Oh, I can't say what happened yesterday
What my eyes measured from a distance -
A blue lotus closed and compact,
A lustre of blueness inside Kadamba creepers
On the bank of Ravi's daughter (Jamuna).
My body shivered, I was restless

The arrows of the god I feared pierced me ...
And suddenly from inside the arbour
A soft, sweet sound of flute kissed my ears
I forgot, I did not know what to do
All my restrictions of caste, family, position gone....

In the second song (*Kha*, *raga Kedar*) Lalita is aghast. She rebukes Radha for her thoughtlessness and indiscretion :

Oh, you, who has the eyes of a playful *Khanjan* bird
Have you been so bad, how could you dare
And wish for the flower of the divine tree,
And scatter the seeds of agony
In the fields of your heart...
Your body, so soft, withers
At the touch of the sun's rays,
How could you dare to extend your hands
To touch the sun's globe,
Or have you eaten something intoxicant
And lost your senses,
Or you sleep on the edge of a sword
And think that it's a bed.

In the third song (*Ga*, *raga Todi Paraja*) Radha feels subdued, says she said so because her agony was in excess :

Oh, friend, forget whatever has been said,
I asked you only privately
Because my agony was in excess.
Your heart deep as Ganga
Your affection deeper,
I have slipped, I have hurt myself,
Tell me how can it be cured ...
The sound of the flute has undid me
I am lost -
I can't eat, can't put on clothes, can't be in form
What shall I do if seniors come to know of it.

This way it goes on, song after song in 34 songs and in *raga* after *raga,* in an implied dialogue-form, as if a drama is enacted in front of us, first Radha and Lalita talking to each other, then Lalita to Krushna and Krushna to Lalita, till we come to a point, when the rendezvous succeeds, Radha and Krushna unite, the whole nature bursts into spring, and people's minds everywhere get released from sin and enter into holiness :

Sweetly, softly, the spring wind blew
It spread in the whole of Kadamba arbour,
Honey dropped from flowers,
The bumble-bees in groups sat on them,
Radha's lustre like that of gold
And Krushna's like that of emerald
Filled the forest land,
The fragrance of love spread all around.....
The gods from high heaven threw flowers
The Gandharvas sang, the divine dancers danced,
The sound of drums extended everywhere
And people's minds in three worlds
Got freed and released from sin. (*Ma, raga Kamodi*)

Kishor Chandranada Champu was the acme of Baladev's creative career. But, as we said, he had also a large number of independent Choupadis where he also excelled in poetic merit Thus as an example, in *Jebe Shyamaghana* (When Shyama's), shows Radha's happiness when she hears Krushna's flute in the forest :

It's a fine dalliance in the forest
If Shyama's sound of flute is heard
Even once at night.
The bees buzz, the cuckoos sing
The soft, fresh spring-wind blows,
And all are startled, happy
And the seeds of supra-happiness sown everywhere.

Or, her restlessness, as in *Kahinre Mana Sahi* (Nowhere O friend) :

Oh, my friend, my mind is not happy anywhere
Tell me what to do.
How could I get, how could I leave
The love of Shyama who is like a new cloud.
A moment becomes an age
How should I contain myself.

Or, differently, even independent of Radha and Krushna, the agony in love when the lover is away *(Bidhata ki na karai go,* What the destiny does not do) :

What the destiny does not do,
It's the new love, and he is away.
Whatever in my mind did not happen
Whatever happened was not in my mind,
Now the cuckoo sings
The sweet soft wind
And sweet buzzing of bees -
They all burn my heart...
Look, the forest and hills full of sweetness
Ah, he forgets me
And stays in which Madhupuri, the land of honey.

Kavisurya Baladev Rath was a fine poet and a fine scholar. He could express emotions in great abundance as also in complete control. The echo of his poems filled early 19th century Orissa, so also the poems of his illustrious companion, Gopalkrushna Pattanaik, who also came from southern Orissa (Parlakhemundi).

Gopalkrushna was' born in 1784 in an affluent family, where his father Banabasi Pattanaik was a poet in the King's Court and was permitted by the King's order to receive the income from 19 villages for his upkeep. Gopalkrushna spent his childhood under the loving care of his parents, and read as was the custom in those days, Sanskrit grammar, lexicon, and poetry as well as ancient Oriya poetry and works by Vaishnav scholars. He was married at the age of 23, and immediately after that his family was put to

distressing situation due to the King's wrath, and had to leave Parlakhemundi and went over to Ganjam, about 160 kms towards the north, near Berhampur. But the banishment and the difficulties the family went through did not last long. Gopalkrushna was recalled by Parlakhemundi's king Gajapati Narayan Dev himself, a connoisseur of literature, and was given a good position at the Court and got settled there. All these years he had continued to write poems and had been increasingly drawn towards Vaishnavism, into which he was indoctrinated in his middle age. The conversion substantially affected Gopalkrushna's poetry in the sense that its mode and direction changed, and it came to reflect chiefly the intention and intimacy of Vaishnav belief. He died in 1862, when he had already become a legend, and his poems were being sung far and near all over Orissa.

The collections of Gopalkrushna's poems to be noted are by Ramakrushna Pattanaik, the poet's great grandson (1919), Babaji Baisnab Charan Das (1959, 1960), Kali Charan Pattanaik (1959), Saroj Kumar Panigrahi (1969) and K.C. Behera (2003), and the total number of poems, of all categories, would be about 650.

Thematically the poems of Gopalkrushna can be divided into four broad categories. The earliest are the poems that deal with secular love poetry, that is, the love of a youngman for a young woman and vice-versa, in an idyllic, rural surrounding. The poems exhibit a general concern with love as a preoccupation for the young mind which at times becomes deeply introspective and intimate. There is an emphasis in these poems on separation and on the related mood. In addition, other situations such as the youngman's solicitations, his request for love-act, leave-takings, and the lady's sorrow etc., in general, conform to the tradition of earlier love-poetry in Oriya. The references to Radha and Krushna are yet to come, but in the background of these poems one can sense the presence of the 'sly, startled girl' and the 'love-lorn youth'

of the Vaishnav love-poetry. The structures of these poems are precise and compact, and the love-feelings they communicate have the tightness of disciplined-emotions. Some good examples would be such poems as *Smare dei bandhu na jare* (Don't please, leave me to Cupid), *Jiban bandhu maguni maguchhire etiki(Oh,* My life's friend, I'm asking for this much), *Preeti Riti* (The Ways of Love), *Bhala rachila bama* (What picture the woman showed), *E ghana dina* (These Rainy Days) etc. as well as longer poems as *Jaiphula Chautisa, Chitau Chautisa* and *Jalada Chautisa* etc. The second category can be termed as devotional poems, or poems related to the feelings of *bhakti.* The moods are *santa* and *dasya* and in some cases *sakhya,* the devotee making a total offering of himself before his Lord and praising the Lord's love and glory. The poet wrote his devotional poems not in any particular period but at different times of his career, and apart from the variety they show, in most of the poems the poet refers to beauty and grace of Radha and Krushna with great love and devotion. Even in poems dealing with Sri Gauranga the poet equates Sachi's son Gaurachandra as Radha and Govinda in one form and worships him accordingly.

The third category deals with poems dealing with parental love or *vatschalya rasa.* These are some of the most memorable poems of Gopalkrushna. They generally express Jasoda's feelings for Krushna as a child, though in each case there are references to concrete situations and incidents, and in a different form the poems can be taken as expressing every mother's feelings for her child. Krushna as a divine being is forgotten and what comes out in poem after poem is a mischievous, fun-loving child whose games and pranks fill a mother's heart with happiness as nothing else can. The influences on Gopalkrushna in this regard can be traced to two sources. One to ancient Oriya peetry, which goes as far back as the 15th century and to Markanda Das, and the continuity of this tradition through Sankar Das, Dinakrushna and Bhaktacharan,

The other, Vaishnav Padabali poets of Bengal such as, Shyamchand Das, Jadabendra Das, Ghanaram Das and Balaram Das etc. who have lovingly described the childhood days of Krushna, But Gopalkrushna exceeds them all and his feelings of parental love are like 'honey spilling ever a cup', and it fills the reader's heart with instant delight and pleasure, Some notable example are, *Uthilu ede begi kahinki re* (Why have you got up so early ?), *Mo Krushna chandrama pari ana ke achhi sari* (Is there anybody like my Krushna ?) and *Brajaku chora asichi gheni neba sua tuni hei re* (The thief has come to Braja, he will take you away, please sleep quietly) etc.. The fourth category consists of the most numerous poems of Gopalkrushna, and his best. The theme of love continues with greater intensity and expansion, The protagonists are Radha and Krushna and the mood is *Madhura rasa,* the best of all moods according to the Vaishnavas. On the one hand it is physical, concrete and mundane. On the other, it goes beyond that to a point where 'time' and 'timeless' intersect and 'fire' and 'rose' become one. In describing the love of Radha and Krushna, the poet has gone to many details - to their feelings of affection, anger, restlessness, agony, suffering as well as the extent to which they could identify with each other. Even, like any Vaishnav poet he has referred to eight 'natures' of Radha as heroin, that is, *abhisarika, vasakasajja, utkanthita, bipralabhdha, khandita, kalahantarita, prositabhartruka* and *swadhinabhartruka* and has illustrated each in notable poems. But at the same time he maintains that this love has no place for personal desires, in fact anything personal becomes secondary, and it finally emerges in a totality of absorption, in a world of great joy and beauty, where all separation, anger and agony end in bliss.

Gopalkrushna's poems depicting the love of Radha for Krushna and vice-versa exhibit a whole world of moods, emotions and mental situations. The poems have twin dimensions, that is, on the one hand conforming to prevalent Vaishnavite tradition and

on the other, reacting to the complicated motivations of human heart and behaviour, and giving that a shape through the meaning and significance of words. In other words, the tradition of Vaishnavism was felt strongly and expressed graphically, and at the same time, that became a catalytic agent and Radha-Krushna themes became like so many objective co-relative that gave a sensitive, creative response to what was dominant in the minds and hearts of the people of the time. The whole structure of Radha-Krushna relationship has a strong element of drama that has opened up in sequences. In the beginning it is Radha's independence, an identity of her personality, an expression of irritation at Krushna's unnecessary interference when Krushna waylaid her on the way :

Oh, Banamali, give me way
I have finished bathing
I want to pluck flowers to worship the sun...
What's this fun on the way
Go wherever you want to go
Show all your antics to whoever likes them.

(*Patha chhadi de*, Give way)

Next, a slow awareness, along with a sense of fear :

Oh, I'm afraid of Shyama, afraid of his love
Let she love him who has a body of steel,
I have heard of Chandrabati
Like beating of drum all over Braja,
Whoever cowherdess goes to sell milk
He pulls her down to bed, Oh.

(*Shyamaku juhar*, I fear Shyama)

But happiness comes, first as a revelation from a distance, when she narrates her experience to her companion:

Oh, when I went to fetch water
From Kalinda's daughter yesterday,
What did I see under the Kadamba tree,

Was it a piece of cloud
Or a blue statue
I couldn't know,
It's dancing before my eyes, O friend ...
The peacocks raised their tails wildly at the back
And called and danced
Why, why did they do so, O friend.

(*Jala ani jai kali,* Going for water yesterday)

Then at unusual hours, providing deep contentment of mind :

Whose flute is that in the forest
Who blows it in the loneliness of deep midnight
Oh, friend, is his face full of honey,
The sound floats from the bank of Kalindi
Is there anything equal in the whole of Braja.

(*Bansi Bajuchhi Re,* Oh, the flute plays)

Even in usual hours, when she is routinely with seniors :

I was talking to seniors when I heard it
It startled me,
A great happiness filled my heart
My body shivered as if in cold...
Was it night or day
Was it home or forest
Did I wake or dream
I couldn't know. (*Shyamasundar)*

The invisible bond grows, and Radha becomes subject to all types of traumas. For example, her condition becomes unenviable when Krushna suddenly comes to the kitchen where she was :

I was with mother Rohini in the Kitchen
When the great lover came.
My heart beat
My senses went wrong
And I split the honeyed-water round me.

(*Aja Brajaraj Pure,* Today in the house of Braja's king)

Or in the bathing-ghat, when he suddenly came along :

I was rubbing my body lazily
When my friend warned me,
I got up quickly
My friend covered me
My whole body shivered.
My hair was loose
My clothes were untied -
They were not where they should be ...
As he came along
I could not know what to do,
'Dip in water' - my friend said.

(*Kahile hele kete,* How much to say)

But slowly the identity is established, the two become one :

I do not know
Why I see Shyama's figure
All over days and nights.
I feel he is at my back
But when I look he is not there,
And when I look at the front
He hides in my heart.

Finally, it is complete submission, Radha offers herself to Krushna :

I sacrifice my family and caste, O friend,
Shyama's love is my only life,
Whatever penances I had
I now offer all at his feet
And all my holiness from millions of birth....

(*Deli sahi,* I give O friend)

Gopalkrushna's belief in Vaishnavism illuminated him, as his understanding of people provided him with necessary nourishment. What finally came out was a rare vision of immense beauty and grace.

Banamali (Banamali Pattanaik, Vaishnav name

Ballavananda) was born at Puri (Dolamandap Sahi) and stayed at Puri throughout his life in very adverse situations. He was senior in age to both Kavisurya and Gopalkrushna, was probably born in 1729, and died in 1790, at Brundavan. He had a Kavya entitled *Mathura Lila,* and also another entitled *Sachitra Ramayana,* an Oriya adaptation of Bhojaraja's well-known Sanskrit Kavya *Ramayana Champu.* But Banamali's main reputation was as a considerable Padabali poet that rose almost to the height of Kavisurya and Gopalkrushna at times. Particularly impersonating himself as a companion of Radha, almost like what Avimanyu did in his poems, in a frame of complete surrender and devotion, was a rare treat in Oriya Vaishnav poetry. The structure of Banamali's poems as a whole illustrate his emotional intensity and involvement as related to Radha-Krushna Lila very aptly. Thus this is how Radha felt when she saw Krushna :

> Suddenly my eyes fall on Shyama
> And my wisdom conscience, all, drowned.
> What charm and beauty !
> What figure like a new cloud !....
> His thin waist and dancing body
> And quizzical side-ling glances
> Pierced my heart like the tip of an arrow....
>
> *(Shyama Sriranga)*

And she considered her condition in love like the tongs of a blacksmith :

> Oh, friend
> I became like the tongs of a blacksmith
> Sometime in water
> Sometime in fire
> Both are the same to me....
> Thus says Banamali-
> If you love there is no happiness
> You pine and die again and again,

Like a snake catching a mole
You can't swallow, can't leave.
And when you think of a gain
You lose. *(Ago sahachari,* Oh, my friend*)*

Finally, Radha renounces everything and goes over to Krushna :

I become an outcaste, O my friend,
By making Shyama's love my garland.
Let them say what they like
I do not grieve, never,
The black god is my secret treasure
I am sold to him as a slave, O friend....
Some say Radha is unchaste
Some say Radha is mad
Some praise me
They say I am rich in love.
For whom all these, O friend
Who takes these blames and praises ?
I do not balance profit and loss
1 am Krushna's slave on my own,
Find out, ask everybody
I cannot taste my food without him.
How can I forget, O friend
That new *tamala* grace,
The sweet movement of the new dancer
The seductive boy who has a flute in hand...
Thus says Banamali -
O, Radha, listen
Love secretly, move secretly
Unite with your lover secretly
Or else they will slander.
They will sit on your reputation everywhere.
(Mun ta kularu heli bahar, I go out of the corte*)*

Kavisurya, Gopalkrushna, Banamali and many others like

them lived in Orissa at a time, when in spite of political hazards, the whole country was reverberating with the songs of Padabali poets, and Puri, the seat of Lord Jagannath, as well as the countryside of Orissa, were full of the songs about Radha and Krushna. It was a rich symphony, that grew up along with the most fascinating voice of the Kavyas. But it was of different tenor different involvement and different substantiality. In a way it was a fitting summing-up of the rich heritage of Oriya poetry. On the other, it provided a rich nourishment, even more than what the Kavyas did, to a harassed, disturbed nation in its days of immense tribulations and distress They smoothed the ways to turn over to the nineteenth century, to a tribal poet, as great as Sarala Das 400 years ago, and as Sarala began the long journey in the 15th century with a great flourish, he ended it with an equally substantial aplomb in the nineteenth. He was Bhima Bhoi.



8

BHIMA BHOI

Bhima Bhoi was born in the middle of the 19th century (probably in 1847) and belonged to a tribal Kondh family. The exact place of his birth is controversial, but most probably it was in Redhakhol area, an ex-State, at about 80 kms from Sambalpur, towards the east, in the village Gramadiha or Kankanpada. His father was Janardhan Bhoi (probably foster-father, and Bhima was a castaway child) whom he lost early, and was looked after by his uncle. It is also said that he was born blind, but most likely it was not so, and if at all he became blind, that must have happened at a fairly late age. Bhima's early life was spent in great poverty and destitution. He had to tend cows of the villagers to eke out a living, but as he admits laterly, that was not enough to give him two square meals a day. Similarly, he was not educated by whatever formal education was available during his time (the British administration and the missionaries had already started schools in many areas), but he was self-taught, had a sharp intelligence and powerful memory. As his writings show he was well-versed in many matters. First of all, his knowledge of ancient Oriya writers, particularly Sarala, Balaram, Jagannath, Achyuta, and in general the 16th century Bhakti writers, was almost complete, and they provide a continuous frame to whatever he wrote. He has taken many episodes from the *Mahabharat, Jagamohan Ramayana* and *Srimad Bhagabat* and has retold and recreated them in his writing. Even the account of 24 Gurus as depicted in the 11th Skanda of Jagannath's *Srimad Bhagabat* finds an echo in his *Stuti Chintamoni.* Bhima's indebtedness to Achyutananda was probably closest. He took such terms as *jyotijwala, trikuta, bankunala, alekhpatna, phunkabandha* etc. from Achyuta's *Sunnya Samhita*

and used them freely to explain his own point of view. In imitation of Achyuta's *Malika* he discoursed on future events in *Stuti Chintamont,* and also repeated Achyuta's socio-political references in his writing. That was one aspect of Bhima's range of knowledge - his links with his own heritage, own literature, and intimacy with the writers of his own language. Secondly, his knowledge extended to other areas too, again as evidenced from his writing, to Buddhistic and Vedantic ideas and concepts. Thus his references to *Naganti, Joganti* and *Sidhanti* show his acquaintance with different sects and schools of Buddhism, as well as his references to Gita, Upanishad and Vedantic concepts establish how well-versed he was in them. In short though not formally educated he was well-educated in a way, and was acquainted with whatever contemporary learning was available to him from the environment. All that, wedded to native genius, could produce in Bhima Bhoi an extraordinarily wise and perceptive writer who could not only grow on his own, but posed a remarkable summing-up of the rich heritages of ancient Oriya literature.

It is amazing, when one thinks of the complete destitution that Bhima had to suffer in his childhood days. He himself admits the agony in *Stuti Chintamoni* :

> Not tears but blood flowed from my eyes
> I wiped that out, none could know except my God,
> My anger rises when I think of that
> The body shivers, heart palpitates,
> Strange, how the body tolerated all that,
> How could it stay as one, didn't fall into pieces,

Bhima Bhoi was 14 at that time. He had no friends, no support. The world was hostile. He was lonely, helpless, no aim in life :

> I had no friends, no place, no identity
> I was like being upturned, legs up head down,
> I gazed only at emptiness
> Didn't know how I stayed on,
> Didn't know which branches would bail me out
> How my hands and legs would touch them.

The change came when he was 15, through Mahima Swamy. The Swamy was a much revered holy man, who lived in austerities, a Yogi and a Sannyasi, who preached and endeavoured how best man's habits, morals, conduct and character could be improved. Basically the Swamy was a religious man, given to complete devotion, and was reputed as the founder of a new religious cult, named after him as 'Mahima Dharma', that instructed men against all forms of idolatry, caste division and external religious rituals that people adopt to come near to their gods. It put emphasis on a few simple things - to sing the God's name, to have pure, unsullied devotion for God, to completely submit to God, and to conduct a life free of all selfishness, greed and desires. At the same time it put emphasis on meditating not on so many forms of God, so many inanimate forms everywhere, but on one absolute being *(Paramabrahma)*, and to consider God as without form, without colour, without shape and figure *(Alekha)*. Bhima had seen Mahima Swamy earlier as a child, and had been influenced by his bearings and by whatever he had said. In fact, the Swamy had been very much in his mind throughout and his thought used to give him mental strength in his difficult days. It was the month of *Kartika* (October-November), the 10th day of the bright fortnight, when it is said, Mahima Swamy came to Bhima Bhoi in the loneliness of the night, and initiated him into the Mahima Dharma.

Bhima's life thereafter changed, as if a rudderless boat got stability and direction. Bhima was accepted as a 'household disciple' of Mahima Swamy *(Gruhi Sannyasi)*, and his days of privation were over. He got married, got settled, gave himself to devotion and Yogic discipline and led a life singing the glories of Mahima Swamy and propagating the tenets of Mahima Dharma - a life based on truth, compassion and non-violence. But the times were difficult. First, it was the caste and superstition-ridden Hindu society, and secondly, the society itself, the long years of impoverishment and obedience, that had eaten into the social fabric, and had permitted all types of base institncts to operate. Bhima had to face all that, beginning from indifference to resistance and

clean hostility. In 1866, a few years after Bhima's initiation into Mahima Dharma, the devastating 'Na-anka' famine took place in Orissa. Bhima's experience of the famine was cataclysmic - the first-ever such record by an Oriya writer, comparable to Phakir Mohan Senapati's such record in his *Atmajiban Charita,* in the early decades of the 20th century, motivated towards praying for God's mercy and kindness:

No drop of water in the earth, in the sky
Oh, you holy men consider,
The earth's juice is all dry, sucked
Oh, God, have pity, let there be rains.
The body of the world shivers, crushed
Oh, Master, have kindness, help,
Heat rises from three worlds
People cry, all cry- help, help !

(Astakbihari Gita)

Bhima was greatly disturbed, so also he was equally disturbed by the contemporary social conditions and generally by people's behaviour. But he had unflinching faith in Mahima Swamy, and strongly believed that the things would improve. Mahima Swamy passed away in 1876. It was a big shock to Bhima. Thereafter, in 1877, he shifted to a place called Khaliapalli, near Sonepur, where he established his hermitage *(ashrama),* stayed there till his death in 1895, and continued to give his time to the spread and propagation of Mahima Dharma, and in course of time came to be revered as a legendary, holy figure, to whom people came for advice and worship. Bhima Bhoi had a flair for poetry-writing even from his childhood days. Mahima Swamy's association lit the fire, and by the time he came to settle at Khaliapalli, he was already reputed far and wide as a great poet, and in the people's mind given a rank along with the great Panchasakhas of the past - who sang glories of God and also castigated the evils of the society in strongest terms. Bhima did both, his purpose being how best man can live in benignity and in mutual trust, compassion and truth. It was a progression from a

poor, destitute boy to a great liberal, humanistic poet.

For Bhima Bhoi writing was a matter of faith. Apart from being the expression of his own spiritual experiences and perception, it was also necessary from a purely matter-of-fact reason - towards propagation of Mahima Dharma. In fact he was the greatest exponent of Mahima Dharma, at least that is what he took upon himself under the instruction of his Guru, Mahima Swamy, and he was engaged in writing throughout his life. It is said that he had appointed four script-writers who took down whatever poetry he composed, in palm-leaves, and they were sent to the Swamy who first listened to them, and then subsequently carried and sung in the countryside by the Mahima Sannyasis. Bhima wrote a large number of *bhajanas* and *chautisas,* apart from other types of writing, both personal in nature as well as related to religious concepts and ideas. Though attempts have been made by some publishers and interested scholars to collect his writings together, yet it has not been possible so far to prepare an authentic edition of all Bhima's writings and a large number of his writings lie scattered and unpublished even now. His published writings include - 1. *Stuti Chintamoni* (Prayers to Chintamoni), a Kavya that gives personal accounts as well as of religious perception; 2. *Brahma Nirupama Gita* (Assessing Brahma Gita), related to an exposition of *Brahma Jnana;* 3. *Adi Anta Gita* (The Beginning and the End Gita), also an exposition of *Brahma Jnana* and spiritual ideas; 4. *Astak Bihari Gita* (Eight Movements' Gita), related to the then social situations along with references to human body; 5, *Nirbeda Sadhana* (Unattached Austerities) related to Mahima Dharma; 6. *Sruti Nisedha Gita* (Hearing-denied Gita), also related to Mahima Dharma; and a large number of *bhajanas* (more than 300) and *chautisas* (more than 20), and additionally, interestingly, a few *bhajanas* in Bengali.

Stuti Chintamoni (a distant similarity in title with Avimanyu's *Bidagdha Chintamoni)* is Bhima Bhoi's earliest extant work, and is reputed for its excellence and high quality, and is considered as the best of his Kavyas. It is divided into 100 chapters,

called *Boli,* and each chapter has 20 couplets, a total 2000 couplets. The subject matter has different aspects. First of all, it is full of personal reminicenses - a sorrowful account of the poet's early life of privation and destitution. Secondly, it is about Mahima Swamy - his arrival, his Yogic austerities at Kapilas, his preachings of the tenets of Mahima Dharma, in short, generally about his activities, and the rules and disciplines which people initiated into Mahima Dharma should observe. Thirdly, it discusses about spiritual ideas and perceptions such as *Brahmajnana, Pinda Brahmanda Vada* and the process of the Creation etc., and tries to assess what can be the shape and form of the uncomprehending Absolute Being *(Alekha Paramabrahma)*. Finally, the poet's strong reaction to the socially disintegrating effects of contemporary immoralities and untruth has been put on record, with a prayer to God *(Alekha Paramabrahma)* to provide succour to erring people. First, the condition of the land, steeped in untruth:

Truth, honesty nowhere, lost in the sky
World without virtue, evil everywhere,
Violence stalks the land
Quarrels every home
People fight and kill each other,
The cup of sin spills over
Amazing, how untruth strikes like lighttening.

(58 Boli)

Secondly, an account of *Alekha* in ambiguous mystical terms :

No shape, no form, no colour, no lustre
It plays in vastness, its name never heard,
No desires, no sex, no passion, no illusions
No figure, no shadow, lives without food and water,
It does not respond to worship or *mantra*
Dumb at all times
It creates all, itself uncreated. (81 Boli)

He is also the Great Guru who is prayed to come to the poet's risk, and dispel his mind's darkness :

As light cuts darkness into pieces, Oh, Lord,

Cut my sin into pieces with your sword of wisdom,
As the moon dispels darkness at night
Dispel the darkness of my mind, Oh, Lord,
As the washerman cleans dirty clothes
Clean me, Oh, Lord, of my dirtiness and let me shine,
As gold glows in fire
Oh, Lord, burn me in the fire of Brahma
Let me glow. (75 Boli)

Finally, the poet makes it out as an appeal to people to heed to the glories of Mahima, the incarnation of God, and lift themselves from the mire of mortalities :

Oh, listen, you in three worlds, worship Mahima,
See, how the age of darkness surrounds you,
Oh, all you people who live in this world
Listen, meditate on *Alekha* the Formless
That is your only deliverance.

Stuti Chintamoni has a frame of deep spirituality, and is written in easy, colloquial language, with a direct appeal to the readers. Its mode is *bhakti,* and motivation is towards hope and confidence in spite of sorrows, despair and calamitous situations. The poet's purpose is how best benignity and goodness can be brought in, and people can live in mutual trust and compassion for each other, away from destitution and intolerance. A famous couplet of *Stuti Chintamoni* succinctly refers to the poet's attitude towards people and to the world at large - "Who can tolerate the sorrows of people knowingly / Let my life burn in hell /But let the world be rescued." Or even elsewhere, as he equates himself with the suffering people - "One sword cuts five or ten heads in the battle/ My limbs are cut whenever the limbs of other people are cut."

Bhima's other volumes, as we have noted earlier, are in a way prolongation of core dimensions of *Stuti Chintamoni. Brahma Nirupama Gita* is mainly an exposition on Primordial Being, what Bhima calls *Sunnya Purusha* and *Alekha Paramabrahma.* It is in the dialogue form between the Guru and the disciple, the Guru

being *Anadi Purusha* (The Primordial Figure) who answers questions, and the questions are being asked by *Nirakara* (Formless). The questions and answers relate to the unique *Paramabrahma,* who has no shape, no form, no name, no virtue and is expressed only through paradoxical terms :

He is completely unattached yet involved in all work,
He is nameless Brahma yet has a name,
He is all holiness yet full of sin
He commits crime yet curses for the same....

One cannot reach him, the poet points out, through one's knowledge or through the studies of the Vedas, Vedanta or the Sastras and the Puranas. He can be reached through complete surrender and complete devotion and through singing the glories of his name. *Adi Anta Gita* is similarly an exposition of spiritual concepts and ideas, and also framed in dialogue-form, between *Jiba* and *Parama*. The book mainly deals with such concepts as *Sarira Veda* (Anatomising the Body) and *Pinda Brahamanda Vada.* The poet points out that the body has 10 incarnations, 9 rishis, 18 attainments, 9 areas of earth, 9 millions of stars, the pole-hills and Ganga Jamuna etc. Then at the pinnacle of the body, *Brahma Randhra* (Brahma Hole) and the wheel of thousand elements. That is the perpetual divine place *(Maha Nityasthala),* where *Alekha Paramabrahma* inhabits, and where the perpetual *Rasa Lila* of Radha and Krushna continues, and which can be reached only through proper concentration, devotion and arduous spiritual practices.

Of the three other books two, *Nirbeda Sadhana* and *Sruti Nisedha Gita* were written after Bhima Bhoi's initiation into Mahima Dharma around 1862, and both were important documentary expositions of Mahima Dharma - its beginning, history, development, facts about Mahima Swamy, and his first disciple Govind Das, including the contribution of Bhima Bhoi himself, as well as the core concepts of Mahima Dharma, its lines of austerities and disciplines. At the same time the books detail out the Mahima Dharma's main thrust that it is not through the

whole world or rituals, worships and external trappings, but only through devotion, *Brahma Jnana* and singing the names of the God that one can reach the point of 'release' and 'deliverance.'

Bhima Bhoi's emphasis is on one's own body *(ghata)*. That is the repository of all divinities, as well as the place of Sri Jagannath, he maintains.

Oh, devotees understand
Jagannath resides in the lotus of your heart,
He resides there along with Laxmi,
Oh see that, understand your body
Jagannath is there, not in dry wood or in idols,

Astak Bihari Gita, which has been arranged as per the sequence of Oriya consonants (in the manner of a Chautisa) in 6 chapters, has a slightly different tenor, an elaboration of a dimension we have already noted in *Stuti Chintamoni,* a dimension towards a social consciousness and social factors. This relates to references to 1866 famine as well as to a concern that serious calamities are going to overtake people's lives and one should look for remedy through faith, devotion and spirituality. His description is graphic :

Kali penetrates everywhere
Get together, pray for the Lord...
Kala has got into your homes
It swallows one like a disease
It eats into one's limbs
And there would be only corpses,
corpses everywhere...
The *Kalika* moves around
It cuts all with its Wheel...
Worship at Guru's feet
Meditate on the Name
Call for the Lord, be in wisdom... (1st Chapter)

Bhima Bhoi's *bhajanas,* that are extremely popular in the countryside, irrespective of their moorings in Mahima Dharma or Mahima Swamy, are the best of the poet's writing and are ranked

in the people's minds along with the best *bhajanas* of the Panchasakha savants, and Bhima Bhoi is given a position equal to their position, and rated as highly. In his *bhajanas* an intense spiritual experience has joined with an extremely subtle mystical perception, and both have sublimated in the visualization of a 'shapeless' Absolute Being. The titles of many of Bhima's poems are highly suggestive. They are, for example, *Bahuchhi Abana Bai* (The Unspelt Wind Blows), *Sunnya Mandire Bihar* (Relax in the Empty Temple), *Pada Pani Nahin* (No Legs No Hands), *Anakara Arupa* (No Shape No Form), *Rupa Rekha Nahin* (Shapeless Formless), *Sunnya Swarupa Basi* (Lives in Empty Space), *Utha Sunnya Sikhare* (Rise to Empty Summit), *Arupa Sunnya* (Formless Emptiness), *Mula Sunnya* (Primordial Sunnya) *Anadi Mandalaru* (From the Primordial Orbit), *Nisabda Gharu Anam Saktiru* (From the Silent House from the Unnamed Power), *Amana Mandiraku Kara Gaman* (Go to the Temple of Mindlessness), Ananta Swarupa *(The Shape that has no End)*, and *Sunnya Sunnya Mahasunnya* (Emptiness, Emptiness, Mega Emptiness) etc. The titles themselves suggest a trend towards a strong subtle spirituality, and the structural range of Bhima's *bhajan*'s testfy to that.

First of all whatever is apparently impossible and unnatural, is seen in the organization of experiences:

> There is a shade, but no tree
> There are fruits, but no flowers and buds
> There are leaves, but no stems... *(Rupa Rekha Nahin)*

Or,

> There is no cultivator
> Yet cultivation goes on,
> There is no house
> Yet bamboos are arranged,
> There are no sellers
> Yet the market is held,
> Nothing is being sold
> Yet the bargain goes on... *(Sunnya Swarupa Basi)*

Secondly, there is a feeling of something illimitable, that is, that which is not possible within the physical bounds :

The unidentified wind blows day and night
Who has known it, where?
Who knows the beginning and the end?
In the deep space
On the way of emptiness
The shapeless meets the colourless,
They go through shapes, bodies, universes
Yet nobody can catch them. *(Bahuchhi Abana Bai)*

Or,

He has no legs no hands
Who can catch him?
You can never see such a being anywhere
Such an absolute being. *(Pada Pani Nahin)*

Or,

He has no form, no shape
An empty body
And he has risen... *(Rupa Rekha Nahin)*

Thirdly, it is a disturbing awareness of that great grace and beauty possessed by an illimitable and incomprehensible being, but expressed in the familiar symbols of common beauty and related to the development of familiar consciousness :

Beautiful in a dark colour
Words as sweet as the flower of nectar
See, O, wise men
The lustre of absolute being around you,
And the body is covered
With millions of luminosities.
(Shyamala Rupabarna Sundara)

And,

Rise to the summit of emptiness
See him, the unwritten, in his place
Serve him,
He is the deliverance.

He shines like lightening
The body burns in radiance
Perpetually, forever
Everywhere, day and night
The *Brahma,* the *Alekha,* the *Niranjana.*

(Utha Sunnya Sikhara)

Sunnya or the 'zero point', is a fixed condition in the poetic consciousness of the poet. But it is also an ever-evolving process, and by slow degrees it becomes a complete conclusion. It is that primordial source from where all streams of life emerge, and to which, they return at the end. Differently speaking, *Sunnya*, so far it represents the process of life, is like a circle that has no beginning no end, only a continuation, and its movement is controlled by itself. In fact, the concept of *Sunnya* in Bhima Bhoi is a complete spiritual experience, not to be assessed by normal human activities, and to that extent not to be visualized but to be perceived. Yet, in a way, it is an usual and natural consequence of the process of life with which it is linked and to which it provides a radiance and a glow. Therefore, at one level, the poet could describe it in familiar terms, detailing out various steps, like giving an account of something somewhere. Thus as in the poem *Anadi Mandalaru* :

From the primordial circle all moved
From the formless, in the name of *Brahma*
In the vast, empty space
Only one *Brahma*, the Complete, the Master
And nothing was seen, no form, no shape
From unspelt, unwritten was born wilderness
From wilderness was born unnamed, unspoken
From unnamed was born collective division
From division was born the first sound
From the sound was born creative *Onkar*
From *Onkar* was born the first word, the primary power
And from the first word rose the divine name -
All went upstream
Settled in *Sunnya*

And played there.

The trend that began with Achyutananda so powerfully and with so much of force, after about 300 years, found in Bhima Bhoi, the tribal, its greatest exponent. What was important in these poems af meditation was their structure of wit and analysis. Coupled with other poems of prayer they showed intense devotion and submission, and contributed a uniquely rich substantiality to ancient Oriya literature, particularly poetry. To that extent they promoted attitudes towards life which are fundamental to human living, and constitute a benign part in any growth of human civilization. Bhima Bhoi contributed remarkably to this benignity, as Sarala Das did the same about 400 years ago - two pinnacles, one at the beginning, the other at the end, in the total growth of ancient (and medieval) Oriya literature.



9

PROSE

Prose was not a viable form in ancient and medieval literature, which was completely expressed in one form, that is, poetry. Prose had only a marginal presence, and its style too, was largely influenced by poetry or poetical style. The point is, prose was never pursued as a serious form. The reasons might have been purely personal, that is, personal convenience on the part of the writers to write in poetry; or may be social, that is, the reader's greater interest in poetry, that can be more conveniently listened to and remembered; or just may be, not many models of prose were available in Sanskrit that had a domineering position. Whatever that may be, prose was not a popular form, and whenever any writer attempted to write in prose, he shaped it more like poetry in arrangement, in alliteration, in the use of words and also in using rhetorical devices and ornamentation as well as in incorporating musical structure. Even when serious discourses were written - religious, philosophical, or critical the writers never thought of writing that in prose. Thus whatever might have been the purposes of the writers in writing the pieces, they always thought poetry to be the most convenient form, and easily acceptable one, and all throughout wrote in the same. Prose came as an exception, and apart from small, occasional pieces here and there, we note four or five extant compositions in prose during the whole period, that are fair examples in a way and have earned recognition and acceptance. They are, *Rudra Sudhanidhi* (Rudra Sudhanidhi) by Narayanananda Abadhuta Swamy, and *Chacheri Lila* (The Chacheri Function) by Saran Das, both of 16th century; and *Chatura Vinod* (Four-fold Entertainment) by Brajanath Badajena, *Hasya Kallol* (The Waves of Laughter) by Kavisurya

Baladev Rath, *Prastab Chintamoni* (Chintamoni Discourses) by Nilamoni Vidyadhar and *Chaini Chakada* (Account of Chaini), all of 18th century.

Rudra Sudhanidhi, probably written towards the later part of the16th century, incorporated many of the contemporary trends in literature and religion in its own structure. Thus in consonant with the newly emerging Kavya literature it took up many of the latter's rhetorical devices and propensities towards literary ornamentation, and in consonant with the prevailing Bhakti literature, it gave attention to discussions about religious faiths, and also to the exposition of familiar tantric rites and disciplines. The story is a simple one. It relates to one of the followers of Lord Shiva (a *Rudra Gana,* by name, Abhinav Chaitanya). He came under the curse from the Lord, because he could not keep his mental discipline when tested by the beauty of a young woman (also a semi-divine being created by Parvati). He was born as the son of a king, took the name of Rudra Sudhanidhi, and subsequently grew up as a brave fighter and a learned man, and was finally scheduled to marry the young woman for whom he had been drawn in the earlier life, and who had been born as the daughter of another king. The story ends there, as the book remains incomplete, and what happens afterwards is only a matter of surmise. But the 'simple' story-line has a number of interesting aspects. First, Rudra Sudhanidhi (or Abhinav Chaitanya earlier) is not a Gandharva or Apsara, fallen from Indra's Court under a curse, as is the usual case with Oriya Kavyas. He is from among the Rudra Ganas of the Great God Shiva, himself a great devotee, and his long, '50 letters of alphabet' *(Pachas Barna)* prayer in the beginning, to alleviate Lord's anger, detailing Shiva's great beauty and power, is a singular such prayer, and a finely-crafted one, almost like poetry, in the whole range of ancient Oriya literature - by itself, a fine amalgamation of different views on Shiva including one of Tantricism and the other Hindu religious views not about Lord Shiva, but about Lord Mahadev.

Secondly, Rudra Sudhanidhi's life on earth has a number of phases. The first phase related to the time when he was a foeutus in his mother's womb, when the King invited an Abadhuta to help softening the child-birth through his Yogic powers. The Abadhuta could spot the earlier life of Rudra Sudhanidhi at Shiva's place, and instead of doing the job he was assigned to do, he entered into the mother's womb in a thin form and started a dialogue with the foeutus. This is an extraordinary situation, particularly the place, the timing and the participants involved. There is a strong element of unreality in the situation, yet it happens, probably because of the writer's desire to create an out-of-the-way situation by putting emphasis on the Yogic powers of the participants. But the dialogue conducted has relevant, normal aspects, like any serious discussion between two knowledgeable persons. They relate to religion, religious faiths and various prevalent religious cults, the purpose throughout was to find out real truth inside all that. The dialogue ended at a reverse situation, that is, instead the Abadhuta advising or guiding Rudra Sudhanidhi, he himself was guided by the latter, who advised him that the only way to awake *Kundalini,* man's inherent power, was through meditation of the Supreme Being.

The next phase came after Rudra Sudhanidhi's birth, when as a child he had to encounter the evil designs of a child-lifter. The child-lifter *(Sutakaharini)* was a woman, and according to the writer a Yogini, a witch, and her job was to steal away newly-born children. But she failed to do any harm to Rudra Sudhanidhi, and her eyes opened to the fact that though he had parts of Shiva in him, he had also parts of Vishnu, and she would not be able to do any harm to such a person. She was completely chastised. She prayed to Rudra Sudhanidhi to pardon her, and to advise her as a Guru, which he did, and advised her to meditate on Vasudev and to chant his name.

The next and the final phase in the incomplete book has a

larger spread and a more elaborate one. It happens when Rudra Sudhanidhi has come to an adult stage and when a search is made for a bride for him. This occasions his encounter with Kamananda Yogi. The latter had immense Yogic powers, he was well-versed in all Sastras and Tantric disciplines, and obtained miraculous powers through the blessings of Devi Bhubaneswari. But he never wanted, nor utilized his powers to achieve 'deliverance' or *mokshya,* the final aim of a truly-motivated Yogi. On other hand he wanted to acquire worldly happiness, power, and position, the more the better - a complete control of what he calls *bisayarasa,* material happiness - "Where is pleasure except in material happiness. The only pleasure is that. The only knowledge is that happiness... In fine golden houses, in the midst of fine-eyed women, in moonlight, in bright nights, in bodies smeared with sandal-paste, in the noise of harps, in the flower-gardens, in soft spring wind, in close embrace, in love-happy face of the doe-eyed girl - where is happiness beyond all that. The only wisdom is a realization of material happiness' (p-90). That is Kamananda Yogi's idea of *mokshya* - the way of deliverance through possession of material happiness. Thus he thinks that to please the excellently beautiful woman, Abidya Mrutusanjibani Karani, scheduled to be the bride of Rudra Sudhanidhi, is a desirable goal to achieve, and he tries to abduct her. But all his powers fail before Rudra Sudhanidhi's faith in Vasudev, and he tries to patch up with him.

Rudra Sudhanidhi's encounters, apart from their peculiarity, testify one important aspect of *Rudra Sudhanidhi.* That is, first, the author's range of learning, related to books, authors, references and views etc. - a real scholarly person's equipment anytime, anywhere, a matter of distinction in the backdrop of 16th century Orissa when learning and knowledge were appreciated and valued. Secondly, the extensive knowledge which the writer possessed about various contemporary religious faiths, doctrines, rituals and ideas. That way, Rudra Sudhanidhi as a character is an alter ego of

the writer. He knows whatever the writer knows, or whatever an alert and scholarly person was expected to know in the 16th century. Thus one good way of looking at *Rudra Sudhanidhi* is through its extensive exposition of contemporary religious faiths. To that extent the book appears as if a religious document of the time, and the story part of it, is only to provide a prop to that. Hence the incompleteness of the book may not be accidental but wilful. The writer brings in three competitors to Rudra Sudhanidhi, one given to the ways of Abadhuta, one to the ways of Yogini, and the third to the ways of Yoga. In other words, the references are to three main religious trends of the time - the Shiva or Shaivism, the Sakta or Saktism and Vaishnavism, apart from a number of minor cults and faiths. But as the book testifies, the writer Narayananda Abadhuta Swami or Narayan Das as he is called, was not a Yogi, nor a worshipper in the Sakta ways, nor a Kapalika, nor a person who supported the ways of the Vedant. He was mostly a Vaishnav, or at least a votary of Vaishnavism, given to meditatiag and chanting the glories of the Name of the God. Thus the continuous advice of Rudra Sudhanidhi to his adversaries is to submit to Vasudev and to chant his name. *Rudra Sudhanidhi's* atmosphere is one of devotion to Vasudev, and to that extent it shows a distinct motivation towards Vaishnavism - a viable exposition in consonant with the contemporary Bhakti literature.

Additionally, *Rudra Sudhanidhi* also adopted trends from the emerging Kavya literature, such as its literary arrangement and structure, and among other things, showed a keen awareness of nature's beauty as well as the beauty of women. Thus this is how it writes of dawn breaking :

> Then the night moved towards dawn. The damsels of the east brimmed with emotions of love. The chains of pearls became cold. The lamps lost whiteness, turned pale. Darkness moved into caves and caverns. The hen said 'rise up', 'rise up' to its younglings.

The betel-juices tasted bitter. The warmth of the amorous lady's breasts lessened. Stars shot out from the sky. *Chakrabaka* smiled. The Yogis started their bodily austerities. The bumble-bees moved from blue-lotus to lotus. The owls searched for darkness. The sound of conches filled every place. The sexy women embraced their masters tightly...

And this is how the beauty of woman, with reference to Goddess Parvati's daughter, born out of her fancy, is portrayed :

Ah, what a woman! She bewitched everybody. She adorned the world in beauty. The creatures lost their control. The sea overflowed and reached the Kapilas hill. Oh, praise her. How she looks. Just like the Cupid's bow. Bright like lightening. A fasinating trap for Brahma and gods. Full of captivating sweetness. Like Cupid's pitcher of beauty. Like a fish-hook it catches the minds of the Yogis... Ah, the face is like the full autumn-moon. Smiling eyes like traps to catch the rishis. Like the waves of Ganga to uproot the trees of wisdom...

Elsewhere, the reference is to the beauty of the heroin Abidya Mrutu Sanjibani Karani :

How is she, the jewel of a woman, the princess. A thin waist. Face like the moon's, voice like the cuckoo's, eyes like the eyes of a doe. Walks as elephants walk, demurely. Tålks spill sweetness. She fascinates all in three worlds...

Rudra Sudhanidhi is a remarkable work, not because it was composed in prose, however poetically motivated, at a time when everybody else was writing in verse, but because, it took up various contemporary trends, literary and otherwise, synthesized them in a single structure, with a tone both detached and involved, and with a competence that was wide-ranging, made out a scholarly

intelligent work, yet a fine piece of literary composition. We get scanty information about the writer, but the book lives on as a landmark creative composition.

Chacheri Lila that describes the *Dola* or *Holi* festival of Sri Jagannath has two distinct parts. The account of the *Dola* festival, Sri Jagannath's movement in the streets outside the temple, and the final swinging ceremony and worship of the Lord on the special altar called *Dola Bedi* inside the temple premises, along with people's participation and the details of the festival are graphically described in the first part. The time was later part of the 16th century, particularly the later decades, and the narration of the festival incorporates people's manners and behaviour as well as a lot of realistic details of the time. The second part has a different arrangement. It goes to trace the beginning of *Dola* festival at Gopa, which Saraṇa Das, the writer, being a Vaishnav himself, found it convenient to elaborate on the activities of Radha and Krushna, and particularly pinpointed fictionally how the whole structure of the festival was contrived by Sri Krushna. The whole purpose of Sri Krushna, the account says, was how to be united with Sri Radha. Thus taking the cue from a lost ornament of Radha (an ear-ring, *tadaki),* he arranged a novel procession through Gopa. This is what he said to his friends - "We will now devise a plan. We start a new festival and call it *Dola.* At night we will go round in Chacheri outing. We will have this *tadaki* hung in front. Whoever claims it as her own we will know she is Radha." Thus *Dola* festival is both, that is, first,a people's festival, observed at the advent of spring, when people move around with joy and happiness and secondly, a religious one, having Vaishnavite dimension, where Radha and Krushna as two deities are taken round the villages and worshipped. *Chacheri Lila* incorporates both the aspects, with the difference that Sri Jagannath takes the place of Radha and Krushna. On the 11th day, in the bright fortnight of *Phalguna* (March), first the *Holi* ceremony takes place inside the temple at

Puri, and then Sri Jagannath's standing deity *(Bije Pratima)* Madan Gopal is taken in a chariot *(Biman)* for Chacheri *(Dola)* travel in the streets outside the temple. This ceremony goes on for 4 days, popularly called 'Chacheri Outing'(*Chacheri Lila*), and then on the full-moon day (*Dola Purnima)* the Lord (Dola Govinda) is taken to specially decorated altar *(Dola Bedi)* and the final *Holi* ceremony takes place there. *Chacheri Lila* describes all that, in great detail, and points out how people from all over India used to come there to witness the festival.

The festival takes place in the spring-time, and the account begins with reference to the spring :

> After the *Makara* festival, the spring season entered. *Sisira* ended, the trees put on leaves, cool wind blew, cuckoos sang, the forest took on new beauty, blue-lotus bloomed, the unwilling lady made love to her husband. The forest mixed with camphor smiled. Fragrant wind blew. The Yogis lost their control...

Similarly, the writer is ecstatic describing the beauty of the deity, Madan Gopal, when the deity goes round in his Chachery-travel :

> How to speak of the beauty of Madan Gopal, where can we get a comparison. The beauty of the new god of love, standing in the three-pronged way, the glow of *Makara* symbol, God of all gods, figure of sweetness, the feet like lotus, the pair of sweet tingling anklets, arms full of power, nine jewels in the rings, bells around the waist, putting the sun's rays to shame, yellow cloth, jewels and gold on the body, incomparable breast with the sign of Sribatchha.

So too, the account of Chacheri-travel, when the chariot is carried at a slow pace with music and dance :

> The earth looks as if it is a milky-sea under the moonlight, aided by bright lamps *(Chandrahula)* All mixed, gods and people. The *Pushpak* chariot

descends. It destroys all sins, Somebody chants Hari, somebody scatters red-dust, somebody dancing happily, somebody plays on harp, somebody looks at the God's face, somebody touches the chariot, somebody sings...

Likewise the account is full of many details, whether it is the list of God's servitors *(Panda, Pasupalak, Hadap Nayak, Paika, Lenka, Behera, Mahari, Suara, Mahasuara, Daitapati* etc.) or the list of food-offering (*bhoga)* to the Lord (*Pana, Fena, Sakar, Ladu, Khai, Gotika, Chenamanda, Ada Pacheli, Dalua Chuda, Amruta Kunda, Kora, Mandua, Manohar* etc.) or various decorations of the *Dola*-altar and varieties of idols and images placed round it, or even various items sold in the streets which people buy. What we note is an alert, sensitive mind that was aware of the realites around, and also motivated towards devotion for the Lord and also partly given to a humorous survey of the whole situation. Stylistically *Chacheri Lila* has links with *Rudra Sudhanidhi.* It adopts the latter's poetic trends, but is simpler, more direct and without embellishment. At the same time the creative expansion of imagination in *Chacheri Lila* in comparison to *Rudra Sudhanidhi* is more muted and controlled. The emphasis, it appears, is elsewhere, to present a structure of information related to an important festival of Lord Jagannath, and it provides a good account of Oriya prose in the later 16 century. An authentic edition of the book was prepared, edited and published by Dr.Asutosh Pattanaik in 1975.

The next development in Oriya prose is noted in *Chatura Vinod* and *Hasya Kallol* etc. in the later part of the 18th century. Particulary *Chatura Vinod,* a combination of tales, is presumed to have been written after 1781, that is, after Brajanath Badajena had written his significant Kavya *Samara Taranga.* Whatever that may be, *Chatura Vinod* is an exception in Badajena's total creative career which was largely given to poetry and where he

had made a good name. The important point is the writer's awareness that prose as a form is different from that of poetry. Thus he did not mix up prose and poetry in the stylistic structure as had been done by the earlier writers. Whenever he took up poetry, it was as a separate unit incorporated in the structural arrangement along with prose. Thus along with his prose-narration he used verses, songs, riddles etc., but that always remained as separate units and as parts of the narration. Secondly, when *Samara Taranga* and *Chatura Vinod* are assessed together, what is evident on the other hand, is how the earlier work, though a Kavya, is permeated with prose virtues, or at least with a desire to reshape the verse-lines with a prose timber. In a way, it may be said that Badajena's writings fall into a transition, that is, a part of it, his poetry, continues the prevailing Kavya-tradition, and the other part, his prose, looks forward to such development as came in Oriya literature towards the end of 19th century. The other aspect to be noted is a matter of attitude, a socio-personal one, which is more implicit than explicit, but nonetheless has a forceful motivation in both *Samara Tarang* and *Chatura Vinod.* The former is a praise of the then King of Dhenkanal, Badajena's own place, in the guise of the King's wars with his enemies. *Chatura Vinod,* written later, does not contain any reference to the same king or any other specific king of the time, but generally, speaks about the kings in its many tales, and of people of power, position and wealth, attached to the kings or to the kings' courts, in a manner which does not show them in good light. What is made explicit is their unethicality, immorality, permissiveness etc., in a debunking of kingship and the character of the kings. That singles out *Chatura Vinod* in Badajena's total work, not just because it was in prose. The attitude turns into a matter of vision, that goes beyond the explicit purpose of providing entertainment through well-told tales, into an awareness of rot that was steadily and menacingly developing in socio-political dispensation, that always took the individual as a victim.

The story of *Chatura Vinod* begins with an encounter between the young prince of the kingdom and a young woman named Chanchalakshi, the daughter of a rich trader of the kingdom, when she is on her way with her companion, to offer worship at the temple of Lord Mahadev. Her beauty excited the prince who was eager to establish physical relations with her. Thus he said - "Oh, charming woman, I have lost my senses on seeing you. I have been blind by love. I can't see any direction. Please agree, give your love to me. Take this life of mine as yours. If you don't do this I will lose my life because of you. You will be blamed for killing a male. Everywhere people will say that the prince died because of Chanchalakshi. This youthful property of yours will not be always there. Buy me with your wealth of love." Then the two, the youngman and the young woman meet, and their meeting flowers into 4 main stories - *Hasa Vinod,* related to laughter, *Rasa Vinod,* related love, to *Niti Vinod,* related to ethics; and *Preeti Vinod,* related to pleasure and fondness. The 4 main stories finally branch into 18 stories, stories within stories, like ancient system of story-telling in India, and the whole of *Chatura Vinod* provides an extensive environment of stories, each self-contained and at the same time linked with the rest. Most of the tales are tales of love, largly sexually motivated, told with wit and humour.

In fact, the two important motivations in the tales are, sex-motivated love and humour. We have noted how *Chatura Vinod* began with love solicitations. There are direct examples too, with reference to physical sexual contact. Thus for example, from *Rasa Vinod,* a racy narration how two young people united in love, with a twist towards a description of the night - "There was a city called Tamalkanta. There was a trader called Ratnasekhar. He went to Mandar islands for trade. He stayed away from home for a long time. His wife's name was Narmada who was exceedingly beautiful. Besides she was young in age. As her husband remained absent for a long time, she became restless and grew a strong urge

for sex-act. She was a housewife, secondly a daughter-in-law in a good man's house. So she could not speak out her mind to anybody, and remained in continuous agitation. One day a trader's son named Kishor Chandra of her own caste, came to her house for some work. As their four eyes met, as both were young, they both had an equal urge for sex-act. Both gestured to each other that they should meet somewhere. Narmada said, 'How it be done, there people in the house'. Kishor Chandra said, 'If the mind is made up, one cross the seas. If you agree we will surely meet somewhere. Today is a dark night, if you fix up 'I will come. Narmada said then, I' d be there under the *Bakula* tree at the back, come there. She smiled, shot a side-long glance, and Kishor Chandra left happily. Then the night came, darkness crept in, people accustomed to tryst in darkness moved out, the thieves were out with their instruments, the glow-worms flew, the creatures of the night came out. It appeared as if the night as a heroin, wearing a dark cloudy saree, and adorning herself with blue ornaments was out on her tryst. At this time Kishor Chandra with great joy in his heart for sex-act went to Narmada. Narmada after preparing herself was already there under the tree eager for the act. As Kishor Chandra came they both were happy, like Ganga meeting the sea. Greatly urged by sex in their sex-act they both were like two wild elephants, he and she, and through varieties of sex-act they both were drowned in the flow of love". From *Rasa Vinod* elsewhere the writer's awarness of a women's beauty is equally fascinating, almost like a piece of poetry - a touch of Kavya tradition - "How fascinating ! Is it the spread of a golden creeper, or a piece of lightening severed, or flames of jewel hemmed in, or the moon's orb has increased, or is she Sachi sought by somebody. No, no imagination can reach it. Surely the god of love has set an infallible weapon to kill young people."

Humour as an attitude is pervasive in *Chatura Vinod,* and apart from being a structural element, at least 7 tales deal explicitly

with humour. A good example may be noted in the beginning of *Hasa Vinod* - "There was a city named Kelinata. The name of the city's king is Angadhara. Because of the king's great ability, the people of the kingdom go with begging bowls begging for rice from other places, and fill their stomach. The Minister Dharmabarana (without virtue) as per the advice of the priest, Karma-andha (blind to one's own action) who cites the Puranas, divides the rice thus begged, takes five portions to the royal treasury and gives one portion to people. The king and the queen soak that rice, put salt in it and eat it". The prose account is followed by a piece of poetry, that describes the queen's beauty in equally fascinating terms : "In beauty she has the form of a plantain tree / Her breasts are hanging, forehead high/ Eyes like *mandara* flowers, Body like diamond/ Heavy beautiful feet, the sound of footfall reaches the sky/ And the waist large like that of a drum."

Humour appears to be the prime motivation of *Hasya Kallol*. Even the title of the book is indicative of that - the waves of laughter. It is said that Kavisurya wrote this with an end in view, that is, to make his friend, the King of Athagarh, to laugh so that a fatal boil on his back would burst. Whatever that may be, the work has a number of distinguishing characteristics. First of all, it remains as a singular work of a greatly talented writer, and the question would always be asked why Kavisurya deviated from his poetry writing where he had achieved great eminence, to write this. The intention of creating humour is obvious, and equally obvious is the way it was created through a reverse process, through piling of incongruities at almost every point of every description. Then the work has no frame of stories, the type of which we noted in *Chatura Vinod*. That is intriguing, because that would have been the minimum necessity to get an easy acceptance by the readers. Thus, first of all, written in a form that did not have much viability at the time, and secondly, without much interest for its popular acceptance, the writer must have had some other intention in

writing it, or probably with no serious intention at all, except to entertain his friend, the King, or just to relax himself which many great writers at times do to provide something like a breathing space to themselves.

Apparently humour is the main motivation in *Hasya Kallol*. It can be seen at various points of the account, and also in the references to various people who constitute the whole frame of the work. Thus, initially it is seen in the names given to the characters : the king is 'Ullata Karna', that is, whose ears are short pieces; the priest is 'Akalyana Mahapatra', that is,whose blessings are always harmful; the man who reads and instructs others about the Puranas is 'Nirakshyara Bahinipati' that is, he who is illiterate; the dewan or the king's chief administrator is, 'Ati Durbodhya Dhurandhara Behia Mahapatra', that is, what he says and does nobody can understand, and added to that he was a tall-talker; and the medicine-man *(Vaidya)* is 'Pranantaka', that is, whenever he treats, it is at one's life-risk etc. The descriptions are quite graphic. For example, about the king - "Now we will speak about the King's power, prowess, beauty, tolerance and cleverness. His name is Ullatakarna. At his Lion's Gate the war-drums of Opera parties are played. That King is full of glory. What are his ways and manners ? Even King Janaka did not have them. Neither Yudhisthira had. Nor the King Bhoja. Nor even the great Charkravarty King Mandhata. Not even the great hero King Vikramaditya had that. He sleeps along with the prisoners in the bed-stead of dust. He remains in the inner apartments for more than two hours after sun-rise. At this time the order for food is given - pilau of mole's meat, and the owl's soup...". Then the kingdom- 'The name of that Kingdom is Rahasya Ghosa. It is fifty less than five hundred *Kosa*. There all virtues are defects. They get angry with people of quality. The holy men cook food. The thirst is quenched by munching chick-peas. They feel happy in abusing saints. Pigs are called elephants. Can't know who is of

which caste"etc. Then a list of beautiful things available in the kingdom - "The place contains all wonderful things. What are they ? The warmth inside the breast. The destiny inside the forehead. Sense of shame while walking along the road. The final *(parama)* inside the creature. Religion inside the sun's circle. Heat in the summer. Warmth in hot water. Heat in animals' bodies. Softness in co-habiting a woman... etc." It is followed by whatever is not available in the kingdom -.. "The mendicant has no bowl. No furniture to sleep. No straw to sit. No thatch in the house. No hairs on the head. No sweat in the humour, No strength in the body, No plough for the farmer...etc,". The writer also speaks sharply about men and women in the kingdom, and about what happens when they meet - "People there have great fun. How much can we say, how loudly. There are two castes - men and women. Whenever they meet in the streets, though not known to each other earlier, they address each other thus - Who are you ? Well, who you are ? We are males. Well, we are females. You are male, we are female, do you think we should be together, should we go there under the plum creepers ?...."

As can be seen, the purpose is *Hasya Kallol* is not just to create humour, aiming at an innocent act to make others' laugh. The apparent incongruities and inconsistencies hide a deeper purpose. That is to castigate the social mores and manners, and more particularly to bare the inability, incompetence and stupidity of people who rule, decide the destiny of others. Here lies the link between *Hasya Kallol* and *Chatura Vinod,* two important documents of the time, by two finely-tuned sensitive writers, who purposely wrote in prose, a minor trend, away from the main tradition of poetry to avoid drawing hostile attention, with a purpose to hold up a mirror to the society and to people in position to themselves. In *Hasya Kallol,* as in *Chatura Vinod,* the apparent emphasis on humour moves towards an implicit satire, where humour ceases to be a motivation, and becomes a medium through

which the writer can proceed towards an analysis of the time. It is not that a new tradition is wrought out - tradition of prose, but also a new attitude is wrought out - an attitude to assess and analyze the dispensation one lives throught.

Prastab Chintamoni was first edited from palm-leaf sources by Kedarnath Mahapatra in 1973, and was published by Berhampur University in 1976. It has some specific distinctions. First of all, its prose style was more akin towards modern Oriya prose than we had hitherto seen in the two earlier books, *Chatura Vinod* and *Hasya Kallol,* that is, prose is more formed, more pedestrian, and significantly away from poetry formation. Secondly, it developed a story, in the traditional pattern, socially-related, love- motivated one, related to a prince, a princess, the minister's son, the flower-woman (*Malini)* etc.. that provided a binding structure to the work. Thirdly, it did not have humour as an attitude, or any implicit sense of social castigation. Its main distinction lies in its descriptions, though in a piecemeal fashion. It is given in detail, related to various situations and objects, in a highly realistic manner, almost like making out a list of things to provide as much information as possible. Thus this is how the writer gives an account of the kingdom and the people therein :

> In the south, on the bank of the holy river Godavari, there is a kingdom called Bhabanagra. It has four castes and eighteen sub-castes. The Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras. Additionally, there are other castes, such as, *Kumuti, Bania, Gawra Kumuti, Sunari, Dera, Patara, Koli, Rangani, Salia, Gudia, Gauda, Keuta, Chudaita, Badhoi, Karati, Chitrakar, Rupakara, Sipahi, Lohara, Kamara, Tanti, Tulavina, Teli, Kumbhara, Ghantara, Astalohi, Kimati, Kandara, Khatia, Tiara, Behera,Lolia, Upulia, Palia, Ridika, Magura, Pana, Dama, Hadi, Bauri, Kandha, Sauntia, Betara, Dhoba, Bhandari,*

Telingi, Pathan etc., The area of the kingdom is seven hundred fifty two *Kosa.* There are four lakhs, thirty two thousand villages. It had eighteen market-places, and fifteen fairs are held. In these market places, in temples and pavilions of brick and stone, there are Vishnu, Shiva, Durga and Ganesh...

Similarly, this is how he describes the market-place :

Here the market is held on Mondays. People from far and near from various places, the men and women, the old children, many people, come. One can get everything in this market except father and mother. It sits in the mango-grove in the south, and on its side there is a pond full of lotus. Whatever items are seen in the regular market, this has thousand times more items... Listen how people buy and sell. First let me speak in the language of people who sell bracelets. Their merchandize contains *khadu, mudi, tada, suta, binda, chaki, banka* etc. There the buyer calls for people who know about the trade- 'Oh brother, come, please bargain the bracelets for me to buy.' The man comes and asks - 'What do you want to buy from these ?' The man says, 'I want to buy bracelets worth-eighteen rupees. My wife, daughter, aunt, niece, grand-daughter, for all these, I want to put bracelets in their hands when I have money ?...

Now listen how the pedlars sale clothes. They are sitting with loads of clothes. What are they? *Chandrabana, nakshyatrabhusan, guntha mananga padi, kala bandhi, balu bandha, naga bandha, haragouri, gangajamuna, nokhi, tinigari, dotari, chandanpatia, patachudia, pilapadhi, kumvakarna padhi, boulabandhi, jari dhadia, rajindrapadi, balaram padi, purisottam padi, sriram khani...*

innumerable pedlars, innumerable loads of clothes. Number of negotiators are moving around to bargain the sale and get the profit ... Somebody's daughter says to her mother, 'Mother, we will buy this saree. The mother says 'Oh, wait for another fifteen days, we will buy it next market-day? The daughter says, 'This saree may not be available next time'...,

Prastab Chintamoni, as we noted, was the first, bold expression of prose as a form. As a trend it looked forward. It was a good social document, of a time that is lost, but by itself was full of difficulties, inconveniences and poverty, The book's story was a traditional one, fall-out of such stories in the Kavyas. But the picture it gives, though in pieces, of the contemporary times, was a new development, and it looked forward to the nature of things to come in future.

Chaini Chakada, written by Gurudas Chaini, in comparison to the works we have already cited, is a minor work, neither it had much pretension in establishing itself as a work of literature. Yet it provides racy narration and a direct account of things and situations, and on the whole, a good illustration of how Oriya prose, free of its moorings in poetry, was taking a good, viable shape. Given below is an extract from the same which makes a reference to the well-known story how King Purusottam Dev of the Sun Dynasty in his invasion of Kanchi was aided by Lord Jagannath and Lord Balavadra. The account runs as follows :

Sri Mahashrama Purusottam Dev remembered his past life. He thougbt it necessary to bring Sri Laxmi Nrusimha Nath from Kanchi and re-install him in the Sasan. He ordered ministers, officers and Gurudas Chaini to arrange sending communication to Kanchi. We want the woman Padmini. Thus the communication was sent. But the King of Kanchi ignored the communication. The messengers returned

and informed that the King had ignored. The Mahashrama got very much hurt. He went to the palace at Sri Purusottam Kshetra. Then he went to the Lord and prayed much. The Taliochha (a servitor) stood holding the right hand arm of the Lord. The Mahashrama ordered 'ask'. The Taliochha said what should I ask, you better ask. The Mahashrama said whatever I ask you give. The Taliochha said, 'Yes, I give'. The King returned to his palace. The Taliochha looked at the Lord's face and prayed. What the King asked for I don't know. Under the protection of your arm I said, 'yes, granted'. Please grant that. The Lord on His own said - Kanchi has remained unconquered. He wants to conquer it. Now inform the *Rauta,* we will go first, let him follow us. The Taliochha went to the palace next day morning and informed the Mahasrama. After hearing from the Taliochha the Mahasrama invaded Kanchi. He conquered it. Took possession of Padmini woman. Submitted his obeisance to Sri Laxmi Nrusimha, read *Nrusimha Kabacha*, and became very happy.

We have noted how prose was a late stream and a thin stream, in ancient and medieval Oriya literature. It could not deviate from major trends, and largely, whenever it came, remained as an appendage to that. Yet it also developed its personality, however feeble it might have been, and in both form and attitudes it carved a significant niche, only to burst into rich foliage about 100 years after, at the advent of the modern period.



MODERN PERIOD

1

PHASE I

(*i*)

What is termed as the 'Modern Age' in Oriya literature is *supposed to have begun in the later part of the nineteenth century.* Calculated in years it is now more than a century old. That was the time when attitudes and consciousness developed that put up serious challenges to the traditional ways of living, learning, and evaluations.

Politically, the British occupation of Orissa came about in the first decade of the nineteenth century(1803). But the British had a hard time quailing one rebellion after another, and only towards the sixth decade of the nineteenth century could they consolidate their power and offer a fairly stable government. But even then, the great famine of 1866, popularly known as 'na anka' in which about a third of Orissa's the then population died ("The famine in Orissa stands almost alone in this, that there was, till a comparatively late period of history, almost no importation, and the people, shut up in a narrow province between pathless jungles and an impracticable sea, were in the condition of passengers in a ship without provisions. Things came to that pass that money was spurned as worthless." - The Famine Commission of 1866). It showed that not all was well with the administration, that a change was due in awareness, attitude and understanding.

This was effected at many levels, beginning from political and administrative, to cultural and educational, that is, from a central political authority that could oversee and control local dissensions and interests, and could provide security and rule of law to the subjects, to the spread of new English education and cultural understanding, and newer ways of employment and production. The change can be summed up as follows :

(i) The impact of the work of the Christian Missionaries resulting in printing presses being set up, and creating a new religious literature of prose. (ii) The spread of education, particularly English education, and the resultant opening of the mind towards new, at times radical, ideas from the West. (iii) The growth of the press and journalism which created an educated, alert group of people who could highlight grievances and guide public opinion, and also created a new form of literature for mass communication. (iv) The socio-religious reform movements, particularly those emanating from Bengal like the Brahmo Samaj Movement which influenced some highly intelligent groups of people and did a seminal service in freeing the mind from old shackles of conservatism towards openness and freedom. (v) The creation of a new literature, hitherto unknown, in different genres responding to a change of taste and sensibility which opened new dimensions of expression.

The first printing press in Orissa was started at Cuttack, in 1837, by the missionaries. They took advantage of the new printing media to prepare Primers in Oriya, write books on Oriya grammar, compile Oriya dictionaries and start Oriya journals, such as *Jnanaruna* (1849), *Prabodh Chandrika* (1856) and *Arunodaya* (1861) with the avowed aim of religious reform, and incidentally created a new socio-religious literature of prose. The traditional Sanskrit-based ways of learning came to be challenged and replaced and the missionaries also took initiative to start new vernacular schools, including an anglo-vernacular school at Cuttack (1823) which was the first-ever English medium school in Orissa. The schools were first attempts towards inculcating new western-modelled education which slowly took roots among the younger generation of the Oriyas of the time, and became instrumental in changing their attitudes and taste towards life in general, and literature in particular. Subsequently, Government English Schools were opened at Puri (1839), Cuttack (1841) and

Balasore (1853), three most important towns of Orissa Division; and the first college - Cuttack College, was started at Cuttack in 1867, and the first training school for teachers, the Cuttack Normal School, started functioning from January, 1869. The progress of new education continued to be slow till 1854. But it picked up momentum after 1854 (the year of famous Woods Despatch on education, which while outlining a detailed programme for the growth of education in the country, suggested for the creation of a separate department of education, establishment of universities, introduction of grants-in-aid system and encouragement of Anglo-vernacular education, etc.), and as the records show, by 1881 (when the Cuttack College was placed on a permanent basis and was named as Ravenshaw College) Orissa had 8035 Primary Schools with a student strength of 96321, 22 Middle English Schools, 35 Middle Vernacular Schools, 6 High Schools, 3 Normal Schools, and 2 Colleges, one being Ravenshaw College and the other at Berhampur. The school management and inspection were improved and better organized; printed books were introduced, and use of paper and slates replaced the old system of writing on palm-leaf and with hard chalk. The schools developed the new awareness at a formative stage which had not only a steady growth but was consolidated in the last two decades of the 19th century.

The related development in printing press primarily served three purposes, that is, printing of journals, preparation of text books and printing of books towards development of literature. The missionaries had their press in 1837. But a real breakthrough came in 1866, the year of the Great Famine, when the Cuttack Printing Press was started at Cuttack, by a few educated Oriyas, mostly at the initiative of Gourisankar Roy (1838-1917), an intrepid youngman, and under the paronization of T.E. Ravenshaw, the then Commissioner of Orissa, along with the support of a number of feudatory kings. This was immediately followed up by Phakirmohan Senapati (1847-1918), a bright young writer from

Balasore, in 1868, in the name of Utkal Printing Company, under the patronization of John Beams, the then Collector of Balasore. As if it was a signal, and in quick succession printing presses started to come up all-over Orissa, in almost all the major towns (including a number of additional presses at Cuttack) and by the end of the century there were 15 presses. The presses did various job-works including governmental jobs, and catered to various needs, including printing of books and production of journals.

Gourisankar also started a weekly journal, entitled *Utkal Dipika* (1866), from Cuttack, which he continued to edit till his death, but which survived even after him, till 1936, the longest period for any journal established in the 19th century. The immediate provocation for *Dipika* was of course, the famine of 1866, but it provided much needed leadership to the social, cultural and intellectual life of contemporary Orissa. A similar effort was made by Phakirmohan at Balasore, who started a monthly journal entitled *Bodhadayini O Baleswar Sambad Bahika* (1869), which subsequently became a weekly from 1872. Both the journals were no doubt spurred by the printing presses which Gourisankar and Phakirmohan had already started, but they became the rallying points for new, forthright ideas at two most important urban centres of Orissa, and became the starting points for other newer journals to emerge, particularly under the support and patronage of feudatory kings and rich zamindars, such as Maharaja Basudev Sudhal Dev of Bamanda (Western Orissa), Maharaja Sriramchandra Bhanja of Mayurbhanja (Northern Orissa) and Raja Baikunthanath Dey of Balasore. Some important journals were, *Utkal Putra (1871), Utkal Darpana (1873), Sevak (1883), Odia 0 Nava Sambad* (1886), *Sambalpur Hiteisini* (1889), *Utkal Prava* (1891) and *Utkal Sahitya* (1893). The journals had many inevitable difficulties, such as in funding, production and marketing as well as in getting necessary feed-back of appropriate articles. But the general effect was electrifying and a substantial rapport was

established between the thinking elite and the mass of reading public as had happened never before. The journals provided a strong support to the contemporary socio-cultural ferment, as well as a strong defence for Oriya language and literature against attacks made by contemporary forces initiated by some Englishmen and non-Oriyas of the time.

A similar awakening took place in religious reform movements, particularly through the impact of the Brahmo movement from early seventies. The Utkal Brahmo Samaj was formed at Cuttack in 1869, and between 1881 and 1890 a number of such 'Samaj' or societies were started at different places in Cuttack and Puri districts. The Brahmos helped in the spread of education, established several schools, produced books and journals, and undertook social service according to their ideals. On the whole the movement promoted community kinship and ideas such as monotheism, abolition of idolatry and lessening of social rigours, particularly for women. A remarkable young reformer was Peary Mohan Acharya (1852-1881) who established the most famous of such schools, named the Cuttack Academy, at Cuttack (1875), which was subsequently renamed as Peary Mohan Academy, after Acharya's death. Noted writers such as Madhusudan Rao (1853-1922), poet and educational administrator, and Biswanath Kar (1864-1934), the illustrious editor of *Utkal Sahitya,* the most influential literary journal of the time, among others joined the movement, and for about 30 years, till about the end of the century, it functioned as a powerful fertilizing factor for Oriya intelligence.

The later 19th century was a very important formative time for India, particularly from the point of view of emerging nationalistic spirit. The Revolt of 1857 was both a culmination and a beginning - culmination of continual popular resistance to prolonged British colonization of Indian economy and society, and a beginning of newer types of mass movement that finally ended

with Independence in 1947. The Revolt of 1857 was immediately followed by other movements, such as Indigo Revolt of 1859-60 in Bengal, the agrarian unrest during the 1870s and early 1880s in East Bengal, Mappila outbreaks in Malabar, and Kuka Revolt in Punjab in 1872 etc., till the Indian National Congress was founded in December, 1885, which became the first organized expression of Indian nationalism in an all India scale. From the beginning the Congress was conceived as a movement, and among other things its main objectives were to lay the foundations of a secular and democratic national movement, and to develop and propagate an anti-colonial nationalist ideology. Great newspapers of the time such as *Hindu, Kesari, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Sudharak, Indian Mirror* and *Voice of India* etc., ably edited by fearless journalists who were also important leaders, such as G. Subramaniya Iyer, B.G. Tilak, Sisir Kumar Ghose, G.K. Gokhale, N.N. Sen and Dadabhai Naroji etc., carried the nationalist ideology all-over the land and shaped the thought, ideology and action of the contemporary elite. The Oriya elite of the later 19th century, along with newly established printing presses and new, emerging newspapers, participated in the grand resurgent movement of the time.

Interestingly, the Great Famine of 1866 provided the first powerful impetus to the rise of Oriya nationalism. On the one hand it reflected many dimensions of contemporary Indian nationalism, on the other, it tried hard to establish a regional and linguistic identity of its own. Initially it was a movement against the dominance of more powerful and stronger neighbours, and an attempt at administrative and linguistic emancipation. Secondly, it put forth claims for the amalgamation of Oriya-speaking tracts under a separate Orissa province. It was only at a later stage it allied itself with the ideals and purposes of Indian National Congress and participated in the struggles for emancipation of the country from the foreign rule. 'Utkal Sabha' (1882), 'Utkal Union

Conference' (1903), 'Utkal Youngmen's Association' (1904), the Middle English School at Satyabadi (1909) from where the famous Satyabadi School of writers emerged, 'Utkal Sahitya Samaj' (1914) and 'Utkal Pradesh Congress Committee' (1920) as a part of Indian National Congress etc., a notable few among innumerable such associations that sprang up all-over Orissa, were different steps in the evolution of Oriya nationalism, and apart from Gourisankar in the beginning, two great leaders of the time, Madhusudan Das (1848-1934) and Gopabandhu Das (1877-1928) were the pioneering spirits of the new resurgence.

An indigenous religious reform movement, indigenous in the sense that it was not imported into Orissa from outside, as happened in the case of Christianity and Brahmo movement, but grew in Orissan soils, and in Orissan rural conditions, was Mahima movement. Its founder was one Mahima Goswami, whose early life was surrounded in mystery, but who practised Yogic disciplines for about 24 years (1838-1862) on the hill-top at Kapilas, near Dhenkanal, and thereafter descended to plains and preached his tenets in the countryside throughout Orissa, and even outside, till his death in 1876. It is still a living-faith in many places, and a recent survey (1972) reveals the Mahima ashramas where the initiates rigorously practice the disciplines, as follows: Orissa - 757, Andhra Pradesh - 50, Assam - 33, West Bengal-73, Bihar-12 and Madhya Pradesh - 74. As against the contemporary urban population the Mahima movement spread among the rural mass, particularly the poor and the downtrodden, and acted as a strong force against the inroads of Christianity and Brahmo movement. But in a way, it too contributed towards the total resurgence of the times, as it preached against the twin evils of idolatry and rigid caste system, and aimed at liberating men and women from social and mental bondages, and propagated the ideals of one God, one religion and one caste, very much like what the Christianity and Brahmo movement did. Its greatest exponent was

the poet Bhima Bhoi, references about whom have already been made, who established an ashram at Khaliapali, on the bank of the river Ang, in Western Orissa, and whose songs had wide-spread influence on the common people of Orissa.

As a cumulative result of all that have been pointed out above, Oriya literature in the later part of the 19th century acquired new content, form and spirit, and what used to be only or mostly in poetry, now branched out into different genres, such as fiction, drama, short story, essay, biography, travelogue etc. Even in poetry newer forms were imported such as sonnet, ode, elegy and satire, and in the place of long narrative poems or Kavyas, common in Oriya poetry, shorter, more personal poems manifesting the individual's joys, suffering and intimate concern for life, came to be written. The difference can be noted when a comparison is made between such important writers as Kavisurya Baladev Rath, Gopal Krushna and Bhima Bhoi who for all purposes belonged to the literary tradition of early 19th century, and such important writers as Radhanath Roy (1848-1908), Phakirmohan Senapati and Madhusudan Rao, who heralded change in the later part of the same century. The earlier writers, no less in merit and ability in comparison to the later ones, were essentially linked to the past, to the earlier Bhakti and Vaishnavite traditions that manifested in devotional, metaphysical and love lyrics, and formed a composite whole of the Oriya literature that had growth and development between the 15th and early 19th centuries. Of the earlier trio, Kavisurya and Bhima Bhoi probably had some inkling of things to come as Kavisurya's poetry had subtle elements of wit and satire, and Bhima Bhoi's (whose career, incidentally, coincided with the changes in the later part of the 19th century) poetry exhibited a subtle, yet strong sense of spiritual uncertainty and restlessness. But the latter trio, of whom Roy and Rao were poets and Senapati a novelist, not only moved away from earlier, traditional preoecupations related to devotion and love, towards a greater

comprehension of socio-cultural realities, but also effected the first significant formulations of change in taste and sensibility in Oriya, and became the earliest and most important pioneers to that extent, in modern Oriya literature.

(*ii*)

The modern period in Oriya literature is more than a century old now. The new attitudes and consciousness developed in the later part of the 19th century, slowly matured during this period of time, and continually newer and newer dimensions have been added to the total frame. Some of these may be summed up by way of a general assessment. First of all, with the organization of the Oriya-speaking tracts as a separate area, the concept of Oriya nationhood emerged, which culminated in the creation of a separate Orissa province in 1936, and in the establishment of what may be called the Oriya-identity in the comity of Indian nations. Secondly, with the introduction of British administration and legal system a sense of discipline, democracy and fair-play grew which in slow measures made the common man aware of his role and responsibility in society, and brought him to the forefront of accompanying socio-political changes. Madhusudan Das and Gopabandhu Das, already referred to, the former lawyer and legendary leader and fondly addressed as 'Kulabrudha' (The Eldest of the Clan), and the latter, poet, editor and legendary nationalist Congress leader, fondly remembered as 'Utkalmoni' (The Jewel of Utkal) were two remarkable representatives of the common man. Thirdly, with the introduction of the British education system involvement shifted from the local and the past, to the cosmopolitan and forward areas, and the Oriya intelligence free of its tradition-bound shackles, could realize itself in new colours and imagination, and hence could play an effective part in the pre-Independence movements as well as in the post-Independence era of planning and development. Fourthly, as the feudal and agriculture-based

Oriya society underwent a perceptible change, the emphasis shifted from rural areas and villages, to the newly emerging towns, which quickly became centres of power and wealth. In course of time an urban-based, sophisticated generation grew up which took the lead in almost in all matters of importance in Oriya life and society. Modem Oriya literature evolved, it may be pointed out once again, in a continually changing context. It was part of the new context on the one hand, and helped to shape it on the other. The pioneering writers were, Radhanath Roy and Madhusudan Rao in poetry, Phakirmohan Senapati in fiction, and Ramsankar Roy in drama.

Radhanath Roy

Radhanath was bom in 1848 at Balasore (Kedarpur), and belonged to a Bengali family that had earlier settled at Balasore. His early compositions were in Bengali which he later changed to Oriya. Professionally he was a teacher, and subsequently a teacher-administrator, and served in the Orissa Education Department for about 40 years (1864-1903) of which be became the chief towards the end of his career. Thus writing for him was both a matter of creative urge as well as a promotional activity necessary to provide support and a structure to the new education in Orissa, particularly in Oriya language and literature. Radhanath had started writing from early seventies, and one of his earliest books was a prose tract, the first of its type in Oriya, entitled *Bibeki* (The Moralist, 1873), on morals and manners, and kept up his habit till the year of his death (1908). But the period between 1886 and 1896, a period of about 10 years, was the time when his most important books were published, which together effected the necessary shift in taste and sensibility, and helped in the creation of a new and modern Oriya literature. Almost the entire body of Radhanath's writing was in poetry, which consisted of long poems or Kavyas, including long narrative accounts of love and romance, some of which he freely adapted from Western sources, and rewrote in intimate local contexts and background.

The more important books were - 1 *Kedargouri* (Kedar and Gouri, 1886), based on the tragic story of Pyramus and Thisbee; 2. *Chandrabhaga* (Chandrabhaga, 1886), based on Appollo's pursuit of Daphne; 3. *Nandikesari* (Nandikeswari, 1887), which had echos of Ovid and Byron; 4. *Usha* (Usha, 1888), based on Atlanta's race; 5. *Parvati* (Parbati, 1890), had echoes of Aeschylus and Shakespeare; 5. *Chilika* (Chilika, 1892), a descriptive account of the lake Chilika on the Bay of Bengal, at a distance of about 60 kms towards south of Puri; 7. *Mahajatra* (The Last Journey, 1893), a descriptive-cum-historical account in the frame of the Pandavas' Last Journey; and *Darabar* (The Court, 1896), a biting satire on men and manners. In addition, Radhanath did an excellent translation of Kalidas's *Meghadutta* (1878), wrote a nationalist exhortation called *Sivajinka Uchhaha Bani* (1880), a love-romance based on a 10th century Oriya king, entitled Jajatikesari (1895), and retold an ancient tale about Pururaba and Urbasi, entitled *Urvasi* (1897).

In fact, Radhanath's importance lay in a number of factors. First, he wrote the first epic in Oriya *(Mahajatra)* the first satire in Oriya *(Darabar)*, the first long descriptive poem *(Chilika)*, and long narrative poems of conflicting psychological passions and secular attitudes, the type of which were never written before *(Usha, Parbati, Chandrabhaga* etc.). Secondly, his poetry gave an almost a total exposure of Orissa, that is, Orissa's places, rivers, mountains etc., as well as its flora, fauna, history and heritage, a singularly unique feat where Orissa comes alive like a living organism, hardly surpassed by anybody else before or after. Thirdly, the poet's sensitiveness to nature and to nature's beauty, both in its details and expansiveness, was almost electrifying, particularly the way he identified nature as a part of one's own being, subject to complications of one's livingness, was a new thing, and added a new dimension to Oriya poetry. Fourthly, the pride in one's own land has been converted into a pride for one's own country - an

intense nationalistic spirit, and to that extent injected a powerful new element into Oriya literature. Lastly, his frequent recourse to strong moral attitudes, and an intense awareness of man's contemporary predicament where basic human values get compromised and twisted, provided a penetrating analysis of contemporary dispensation, added a strong fiber to Oriya literature as a whole.

As is already pointed out Radhanath wrote long poems which consisted of both narrative and descriptive types, and he frequently mixed up both. Most important of these was *Mahajatra* which had a contemporary tenor in a socio-political-cum-historical frame. This was designed to be finished in 30 cantos, but the poet could only complete seven due to adverse administrative ire, which was so strong that not only he himself but also his close friend Madhusudan Rao got entangled. The poem was planned to be an epic, and the models were Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Michael Madhusudan Dutta's well-known Bengali work *Meghanada Baddha Kavya.* It was written in blank verse, the first such use in Oriya, and dealt with the last exit of the Pandavas, their journey from place to place, and how by the grace of Agni, the Fire-God, at the top of the Sahyadri mountains (in the Vindhya Range) they got a glimpse of the future of India to the point when the country was possessed by the followers of Devil *(Kali)* and was overrun by the Muslim invaders. The poem begins when after long wanderings the Pandavas at last came to the sea-coast at Puri (Neelachala) where the God Agni met them rising out of the sea. The description was graphic - "In the eternal blue of the watery wilderness, seeing the eternal play of the dancing waves, when the heroes were shocked to silence, suddenly, out of the waves, rose he - shining with light, garlanded with fire, a burning figure, blinding the seas; and the deer in the distant sands ran away swiftly in great fear. He stood, that beaming person, and addressed them."

Subsequently, God Agni conducted the Pandavas across

Orissa, from the east towards the west, and finally to the Sahyadri hills, where on its top, a future vision of things to come, was granted to them. It was a vision of great fear and evil. The Kali descends, and all his followers accompany him, like Satan and his followers descending on earth- "As he said, the sky was filled with great darkness, and monstrous, fearsome shapes danced along. And then Kali descended from above, and all his followers. And Kali's eyes flashed ominous like the tail-end of a huge comet, and he burned red like Mars, and equally fearful. His sharp teeth moved as if in the whirlwind of a mouth like the ever-moving jaws of Death..." The followers of Kali, beginning from Kama or Sex to Alasya or Laziness are described in detail and God Agni points out ultimately how this country of great courage, heritage and beauty would be washed away in a great flood of sin and would be laid to devastation, and men would be worse than animals- "Soon the unity will be sacrificed and this country will depend on others, like slaves, happy, in their petty self-interest... The Aryas will be deprived of their own land and the invaders will come from a distance, like bees stealing honey and they will suck whatever is best in Bharat; and the Aryas like coward village-dogs, will quarrel among themselves for remnants." At the end the Pandavas are shown how the Muslim invaders would conquer the Hindu army of Pruthiraj, and the sun of India's independence will set. *Mahajatra* even in its incomplete form was a powerful creative work, particularly in its motivation and attitude. Though it has continuous mythological and historical references as parts of its structure its content was essentially contemporary- a great resentment against the outsiders and an equally acute unhappiness that this great country fails to rise up and take its lawful place in the comity of nations. One important aspect of *Mahajatra's* structure, it may be pointed out, remains rooted in Orissa, that is, in its comprehensive account of Orissa's places, persons and manifold beauties of nature - a type of poetic preoccupation that was never seen in Oriya poetry before.

This last aspect is best seen in *Chilika* which gives a detailed account of many places and hills in and around Chilika as well as its own remarkable natural beauty. The poem begins with an invocation of Chilika, the lake, where it is spoken of as the most beautiful ornament of 'Utkal' (Orissa) and then goes over to picture its vast blue water, innumerable migratory birds, innumerable colourful fishes, picturesque islands, jutting mountains 'crowding like playful children', overhanging forests all along the coast hiding small, quiet villages, and the change of seasons, and the continual play of light and darkness. This is how the poet describes the time when the sun sets over Chilika across the Valery hills.- "Now Lord Sun sets his golden throne on the top of Valery in the west. As the long shadows fall on hills the yellow turns to blue. As the cattle return home the noise of bells round their necks fill the valley and echo in the forest path. The smoke rises from the hamlets below and curls through the forest. The white-feathered *era* leave the lake to find their nests in the forest, and their wings look golden as the yellow setting sun falls on them." Elsewhere he is equally graphic when he describes the moonlight, the coming of a quiet soft evening, and the night-" The white moonlight falls on the vast blue expanse of Chilika even to the distant horizon. The fishermen's boats now dot the eastern line. They have seen the evening stars on Valery, and as they return home from the sea their happy songs float lazily over Chilika. The spirit of the songs moves over blue water and vanishes in white moonlight. All around sweet maidens laugh and sing.... Now the night has come; the noise is no more; the earth is quiet. The waves of moonlight flood the sky, earth and water, and all look as if washed in mercury. The hills, the islands, the forests, the trees, the leaves and stones- everywhere moonlight falls and glitters. The chequered forest looks like the body of a snake. The hills and the forests are quiet; men do not move; only the cricket sings; only the distant stream murmurs. The night deepens. The peace reigns everywhere." *Chilika* has other

references too, such as, to the past glory of Orissa when the ships used to go out from Chilika to distant lands. But it mainly remains as a descriptive poem, describing nature's beauties- rivers, streams, hills, forests, birds, seasons etc., all related to a particular locality, woven around Chilika as a central figure. In fact, this consciousness of Orissa, not simply as a geographical entity, but living, shining with colour and beauty, rich and healthy, formed a major aspect of Radhanath's poetry and opened new directions for the subsequent generations of writers. But in a different direction the poet could be bitingly satirical, and instead of contemplating on beauty and coherence which he saw in nature, he mercilessly exposed the incoherence and ugliness, particularly in human beings and in human manners. The best example is *Darabar*.

Darabar was the last of Radhanath's major poems, and the only poem that directly dealt with the contemporary Oriya society. The occasion was an official gathering ('darabar') inside the Barabati fort premises, at Cuttack, in 1896, under Orissa's the then Commissioner Mr. Cook, to award 'Rai Bahadur' and 'Mahamohopadhyaya' titles to Balasore's Govinda Ballav Roy (Radhanath's brother-in-law) and Khandapada's Samant Chandrasekhar respectively. The 'darabar' was attended by a large number of Orissa's feudatory kings and zamindars as well as rich and distinguished people, and Radhanath's intitial purpose was to write a humorous piece aimed at his own brother-in-law. But *Darabar* assumed other, much more serious dimension, and instead of being a narration of events or sequences of events, it turned out to be a biting satirical analysis of people's manners and their process of living. The followers of Kali as visualized in *Mahajatra* are manifested here in people who have come to pay court to the rulers and receive titles. In a context of pomp and opulence where vehicles crowd, guns boom and kings move slowly with their retinues, the poet's attention is arrested by the smallness as well as unethical and immoral conduct of men, and his voice becomes full of

resentment-"The old men grow mad for positions like children for toys; they fight with each other as children fight for sweetmeats." Some flaunt their high positions, some their long heritage, whereas others boast that they are commanders of army and killers of men ("These hands have played with innumerable heads and burnt numberless villages, and the Queen, Lo ! has given me medals. Tell me, who is greater ?"). The picture of the police is interesting-"And he says, 'I am the police, I can create a thunder without a cloud, whether innocent or guilty, everybody is afraid of me, and whether poor or a destitute or a millionaire who is not afraid of the red turban'." Elsewhere it is a complete moral castigation of the foibilities of men and women, and a reminder that ultimately the judgements would be different and would be based on now-ignored criteria of virtue and goodness. Therefore the final poetic vision is one of understanding and wisdom -"Don't rot yourself in the dark hole of pride. Ascend the hill of *dharma.* In the eyes of *dharma* all things of the world are equal, as trees below appear equal from a hill-top. Sit there, on the top of the hill of *dharma*, alone, always, and see how the world dances around you." One source of *Darabar*, specially its approaches and attitudes, may be traced to English poetry, particularly to Pope and English satirical poetry. But the poet's emphasis on morality and goodness, particularly the inevitable equalizer at the end, can be seen as being central to Indian thought and approach to life.

The exposition of evil in man is a major preoccupation of the poet. Though it is clearest and most forceful in *Darabar, we* have seen how it was visualized in *Mahajatra*, and remained in the background of *Chilika*. Even it can be variously traced in the narrative sequences, particularly in the development of themes of Radhanath's other long poems, written before *Darabar*. In fact the themes are the variations of one theme, that is, the theme of love, or more particularly the failure in love. It has different contexts in different poems. Thus in *Kedargouri* the context is

social, in *Chandrabhaga* psychological, in *Nandikesari* political, in *Parvati* moral, and in *Usha* and *Urvasi* supernatural. In all these poems the failure has led to one end - a tragic end, and death. Thus in *Chandrabhaga* and *Nandikesari* the heroines die, in *Kedargouri* and *Usha* both the heroes and heroines die, and in *Parvati* all die. Two exceptions are *Jajati* and *Urvasi*. But *Urvasi*, which narrates the story of Pururaba and Urbasi from mythology, is short and incomplete, and anyway in the mythological story the love ends in separation. In *Jajatikesari* though the hero and the heroin get married at the end, that happens only through divine interference, and the sword of death hangs over their heads throughout the poem. In *Mahajatra*, *Darabar* and *Chilika* evil operates in time and space, from socio-political analysis to meditations of past, present and future, and is often seen as an independent entity. But in these long poems it has a different functioning, probably more fundamental, and becomes a part of the story-character dimensions. In fact, as one watches it grow from *Kedargouri* to *Parvati*, it grows in increasing intensity, till in the later it becomes one bleak devastating existence where human life is reduced to infelicity and incompassion.

Radhanath effected a change in taste and approach, as well as in literary sensibility and style, and to that extent, he was a major poet in Oriya literature, in the sense Eliot called Dryden and Wordsworth as major poets of English literature. But at a different level, particularly in his contemplation of human predicament, not only as related to socio-cultural situations immediately, but to larger spheres of the growth of civilization and its attendant evils, his perception was acute. In this he was at par with his friends and fellow-writers, Madhusudan Roy, and Phakirmohan Senapati,and they together were responsible for the subsequent growth of newness and modernity in Oriya literature.

Madhusudan Rao

Madhusudan, a close friend of Radhanath, was born to a domiciled Maharastrian family at Puri (Pathuria Sahi, 1853). His father, Bhagirathi Rao, who was in the beginning working as a toll-collector at Puri, subsequently joined in the Police Department as a Zamadar. He was first posted at Gop, a place about 30 kms away from Puri, and then at Bhubaneswar, a small place of pilgrimage at that time. Thus Madhusudan, who had lost his mother early in life, had to shift along with his father, and his education which began at Gop, continued at Bhubaneswar and laterly at Puri and was completed at Cuttack, where he obtained his F.A. degree, equivalent to Intermediate, highest obtained in Orissa at that time. He began his career as an Asst. Teacher (1871), and slowly rose to become the Joint Inspector of Schools, with occasional charges for many months as the Inspector of Schools for Orissa Division, when he was elevated to Indian Educational Service (1908). Hence, like Radhanath, he too, played a major role in shaping Orissa's education at a formative stage towards the later part of the 19th century, and his activities as a poet were partly due to his involvement in the new process of learning and enlightenment. Added to this, he accepted the Brahmo faith early in life, which contributed a meditative and contemplative outlook to his life and poetry. Madhusudan did not write narrative Kavyas as Radhanath did though he wrote long poems. But he excelled in short lyrics and sonnets, and his poetry as a whole was responsible, as Radhanath's was not, in inculcating a mystico-religious structure into Oriya poetry.

The first-ever poetry collection of Madhusudan was published in 1876. It was published from Cuttack and entitled *Kabitabali, Pratham Bhaga* (Poems, First Part). His subsequent poetical volumes were, *Chhandamala, Pratham Bhaga* (Rhymes, First Part, 1881), *Kabitabali, Dwitiya Bhaga* (Poems, Second Part, 1884), *Sangeetamala* (The Garland of Songs, 1896),

Chhandamala, Dwitiya Bhaga (Rhymes, Second Part, 1898), *Basanta Gatha* (The Spring Tales, 1902), *Utkal Gatha* (The Songs of Orissa, 1903) and *Kusumanjali* (Flower Offerings, 1903). In a general way *Kusumanjali* marked the acme of Madhusudan's creative powers, after which his pace was slackened. The only major poem that he wrote after that, a long poem (158 lines) with a keen mystical perception, was entitled. *Himachale Udaya Utsab* (The Celebration of Dawn in the Himalayas). It was published in 1911, one year before his death. The poetic volumes contained a total of about 200 poems - lyrics, sonnets, songs, elegies, and in general short poems, mostly written in a period of about 30/35 years, beginning from 1873 onwards. Together the poems show three main poetic responses. First, they relate to mysticism, or a poetic understanding of a divine existence in man's life. Second, they relate to nature and a sensitiveness to natural units like sky, river, trees, flowers or even rural nature. And the third is an expression of patriotic sentiments relating to the poet's own nation and country.

Himachale Udaya Utsab is an illustrative poem of the first type. It refers to the breaking of dawn in the Himalayas and how the light spreads from the sky to the hills, and how it affects the feelings of the poet. The poet's mystic understanding is best seen in the perception of a union with the Eternal Soul out of which flows unique beauty and happiness - "In every part of the body/ In every pore/ Rose a new life/ In great happiness/ And all on a sudden/ In a unique musical tone/ The soul danced/ In great abandon/... My ears ring/ The caverns of my heart ring/ In wonderful music/ In immortal tunes/.. And in every atom of this universe/ I can hear the inaudible tunes of veena and flute." A separate poem, *Nadi Prati* (To the River) is representative of the poet's sensitiveness to nature. The poem narrates the movement of a river from its source in the mountains to its final confluence with the sea. The account is largely objective and refers to many

details on the way. The final union with the sea is suggestive of the human life, like a river, meeting eternity at the end. The poet's patriotic sentiments are notably seen in his poems about Orissa (Ref. *Utkalgatha*) where he praises Mother Utkal with all her beauty and glory, and invokes mankind to give up narrowness of mind and unite in love and understanding. On the whole, the poet's continuous emphasis on human values and the quality of contemplation, brought to him a great deal of respect (and the title 'Bhakta Kabi') that has continued ever since.

In fact, irrespective of the factors around him, Madhusudan's mind was like a sensitive antenna that almost always received the messages of an eternal, immortal life. It would be interesting to note how often these got integrated with feelings and aspects of his personal life. *Naba Basanta Bhavana* (New Thoughts at the Advent of Spring) from *Kusumanjali*, is such a poem that combines many of the poet's preoccupations. It begins with a happy note that the spring is back on the earth-, "The cycle is turned/ And the spring, the king of seasons is back/ In sweetness, in the world of sweetness." And again-"The celebration of spring is on/And the sick earth is now like a new paradise/And the flow of life is like the flow of Ganga/And the dead, dull stone blossoms with a new happiness." But slowly the poet's thoughts move towards himself, and he finds himself sick, feeble- "Why, why my heart so stuck/ To a house of disease/ So full of tears, broken, dead ?" As the poet thinks more and more of his 'misfortune' and the 'darkness' surrounding his soul, all on a sudden the rays of understanding shine, and his eyes 'open'-"My eyes of understanding/ Opened like a lotus in the sun's rays/ My mortal eyes saw the unprecedented sight/ My heart's corridors rang with new songs." Then begins the last phase when the poet comes to realize what constitute the 'eternal' and 'permanent' factors of life and how best they may provide a passage from darkness to life - "Oh my soul, look into yourself/ The permanent, the beautiful/ The source of eternal life/

The eternally fresh spring/... Rise, be free/ And break all ropes of attachment/... Submit to Great Being/ And rise to a new life."

In addition to poetry, Madhusudan's main forte, he also wrote extensively in prose, with remarkable logic and consistency, mostly motivated by educational purposes. His earliest prose work *Prabandhamala* (A Garland of Essays, 1880), as also other books such as, *Varnabodha*, *Sisubodha*, *Sahitya Kusum* and *Sahitya Prasanga* etc., provided an almost a complete course in Oriya, in the early years in the schools, on which generations of Oriya learners grew up, almost till Independence.

Phakirmohan Senapati

Like Radhanath, Phakirmohan was born at Balasore (Mallikaspur,1847). He was initially a teacher at Balasore (Headmaster, Balasore Mission School), when he came across Radhanath and Madhusudan, and all three became good friends afterwards. But laterly (1871) he left teachership and for about 25 years (1871-1896) he worked as an administrator ('Dewan' or Manager) in a number of ex-feudatory States of Orissa. He retired from service in 1896, and settled first at Cuttack (till 1905), and subsequently at Balasore, and devoted the entire period of retirement to literary pursuits, when he completed his famous novels and stories. He died in 1918.

Phakirmohan's literary career was begun as a poet, when he translated the *Ramayana* (1884-1895), the *Mahabharat* (1887-1905), and *Gita* (1887). Additionally, he wrote a number of short poems or lyrics on personal themes and emotions, which were later collected in such volumes as *Puspamala* (Garland of Flowers, 1894), *Upahar* (Gift, 1895), *Abasara Basare* (In Retirement, 1908), and *Pujaphula* (Flowers of Worship), *Prarthana* (Prayer) and *Dhuli* (Dust) which were published in 1912. He too wrote a long poem entitled *Utkal Bhramana* (Going Round Orissa, 1892) which was a contemporary literary, cultural and political account of Orissa

done with a fine wit, humour and satire. He also wrote a Kavya, entitled *Baudhabatara Kavya* (1909) based on the life and preachings of Lord Buddha.

But Phakirmohan's real strength in literature for which he has been noted as a pioneer, was in novel, short story and autobiography, all three genres which he began and developed to perfection - completely new genres in Oriya literature which gave a distinctly creative shape to Oriya prose which till then had only a flimsy existence. The novels were *Chhamana Athaguntha* (Six and One- third Acre), *Mamu* (The Uncle), *Lachhama* (Lachhama), and *Prayaschit* (Penance), published respectively, though written in earlier years, in 1902, 1913, 1914 and 1915 respectively. He had a group of 20 stories, which were collected together in 1917 in a volume entitled *Galpaswalpa* (Stories: A Few), and an autobiography (*Atmajiban Charita*) which was published posthumously in 1927. Together, these constitute a body of work, which quantitatively may not be enough, but qualitatively they provided an extremely intelligent and perceptive analysis of the living conditions in the later 19th and early decades of the 20th century in Orissa.

Of these, *Lachhama* was a historical novel, again first of its type in Oriya. The influence was obviously from Bankim Chandra's historical romances, such as *Durgesnandini* (The Daughter of the Castle, 1865) and *Kapala Kundala* (Kapalakundala, 1866). and Phakirmohan being well-versed in Bengali, picked up the model. *Lachhama* was also a love romance, wherein the hero and heroin, being initially separated because of a calamity, were finally united after a lot of trials and sufferings. The background of the novel was those uncertain days in mid-18th century Orissa, the days of bitter fighting between the Muslims and the Marahattas (called 'Bargees') and the narrative structure was a liberal mix of contemporary history, politics, social conditions and the plight of individuals involved in the action. But the emphasis was not so

much on historicity, or contemporary politics, or even the love romance of the two young people, but rather on other aspects, such as social conditions (which has a distinct flavour of Phakirmohan's own times) as well as on creation of memorable characters, with emphasis on courage, fortitude and integrity, and on displaying what may be called a distinct Oriya identity and pride. The beginning, where a party of pilgrims on the way to Lord Jagannath of Puri, were ambushed on the road near Balasore by a group of Bargees, was dramatic, detail-specific and with a pleasant touch of humour, the elements which are common in Phakirmohan's writings :

> The Pausa days (December-January). The day is coming to an end. The sun like a big burning golden ball, scatters its rays in the western sky and descends lower. The half of western sky has picked up an unforeseen beautiful melange of many forms and many colours-blue, red, black, white, purple and ashy. Flocks of noisy crows are flying to their nests. Somewhere a crow out of the flock hurries alone, like a third-class passanger running confusedly for the train when the bell rings. Darkness thickens, so also the cold. At this hour, when herds of cows return home, a group of pilgrims could be seen along the trunk-road close to Godikhal ferry. It seems bound for Lord Jagannath. All bound southward after crossing Subarnarekha....
>
> It is, as if, the calamity comes quickly at the end, like the darkness that drowns all when the sun sets. Through confusion and attacks by weapons, the horses of pilgrims got scared and ran so helter-skelter that it became extremely difficult to contain them. The enemies took this opportunity and closed in. What with darkness and fear the pilgrims failed to

distinguish between their own and their enemies. In fact, at a place they fell on each other. At the same time, like rain water, the arrows and spears of enemies rained on them. After this, it is unnecessary to narrate the end of the fight. Like a leopard that feels joyous when a half-dead male-buffalo writhes in agony on the ground, the thieves in equal joy collected the bags and baggages of the pilgrims. Two aged women lay like dead in the jungle. But they had no injuries. The thieves looked extensively for the young woman in the surrounding tangles, but failed to locate her due to darkness. Let the wench go, let the tigers eat her- they said, and left for their places.

But it was in social novels, particularly in *Chhamana Athaguntha* and *Mamu*, Phakirmohan achieved the real breakthrough, and established himself as a supreme artist. The former is the account of a local zamindar's greed to acquire a piece of fertile land of a poor co-villager, and the manouvering adopted thereto and the consequences - a true portrait of the social exploitation and torture committed by the rich men on the poor on the one hand, and on the other, a symbolic account of how and to what extent evil and negative designs dominate men's habits and functioning. The second novel also portrays the conflicting social forces and also shows the operation of evil and dark designs in men's dispensation, not so much through social exploitation and misery as in the case of farmers, but in a larger canvas of mutually balancing families, characters, and changing cultural habits - a change from a close, almost suffocating atmosphere to a freer, and relatively more relaxed habits and movements, but nonetheless equally fearsome, as the brother undoes his own sister and nephews.

The social factors in Phakirmohan's novels and stories can be seen from two angles. First, it is a perceptive documentation of

contemporary social conditions, such as, poverty of rural folks, economic exploitation, the conflict between the traditional educational system and the new English education, almost absence of female education and feminine freedom, the establishment of a new class of Government employees in the towns, the rigidity of caste system, the corrupted and inefficient police administration, almost impartial judicial system, poor communication network, and a general indifference on the part of administrators towards the welfare of the people etc. Secondly, connected with these social situations, the expression of certain mental habits and attitudes, such as, a general religiousness, a belief in the traditional and long continuing system of morality and values, an extremely sentimental attachment to land like attachment to one's own life, a blind-faith in many matters, a belief in feudal system and in feudal categories, and a general fear for administration and administrators.

Phakirmohan dealt incisively with contemporary social realities and subtle, yet inevitable social changes. He was keenly aware of the corroding nature of the shift, its dimensions in exploitation, misery, greed and selfishness, and the extent all that affected man's character, habits and manners - a searing insight into the operation of evil in life in general. A good example is provided towards the end of *Chhaman Athaguntha*. The hero, Mangaraj, has been arrested on a charge of murder, and Mangaraj's 'faithful' woman-servant Champa takes the opportunity to run away with whatever ornaments she could manage to get, with a person (a barber) Govinda by name, who was obedient to her. On their way they came to a river, where, as it was evening, they decided to stop at an empty shop nearby. There was some strain between the two, and some altercation, the reason being the exact sharing of the stolen ornaments, and particularly the woman's reluctance to give any to the man. Then:

Govinda continued to sit on the verandah sullenly.

Now he has clearly understood how difficult it would be to take possession of the jewels from the snake's head. As we had heard from the people of Govindapur Govinda had some more expectation. It is in the nature of males to expect love, respect and obedience from women. Champa's manners show, she is not averse to love, but Govinda being a barber should always remain at the level of a barber. How long Govinda sat like that even he did not know....

It was a dense dark night. Even it was not possible to see one's own body. The south-wind whistled furiously. Showers of rain splashed intermittently. The banyan tree like a standing dark mace swinged and made fearsome noise. Some bats like small pieces of darkness flew from around and hung from the dark mace, while some others flew away like pieces of darkness into the sky. They ate banyan-berries with a kit kit noise and berries fell platering on the ground. Ghoulish noise all around, and inside the room Champa's nasal breathing made it more ghoulish. The sudden furious snarling noise of two animals under the heap of darkness startled Govinda. He looked around. The light of the lamp burning inside the room was getting thinner. Like a single line of purple light falling on the vast western sky at the end of the evening, a single ray of light from the lamp burning inside the room fell feebly on the darkness below... He looked carefully around. No, nothing. Only the same fearsome ghoulish noise as before, only some pieces of darkness from below the branches of the tree flew flapping into darkness. ... Like a leopard pouncing on a sow, Govinda pounced on Champa. Just then, as the lamp's last flame flickered and died out, nothing could be seen. Only

> the noise of gruesome groaning inside the room, and the restless kicking of the feet which slowly fell silent. On hearing the noise a startled fox hurried away. Like scattering pieces of darkness the bats made harsh noise of their wings and flew around. Just then, a strong blast of stormy wind rumbled through the branches of the tree and the shop. In a moment, it seemed a deluge surfaced inside the invisible darkness.

One may note how the environment is integrated with the action, and how the meaning, particularly with reference to 'darkness' *(andhakar)*, ranges from physical, to mental, and finally to a symbolic realization of darkness which "buries all". Even in his autobiography (*Mo Atmajiban Charita*), where the account is largely straightforward and written with an impartial point of view, the writer records a number of unsavoury situations, and points out how at many points, and in spite of his best wishes and attempts, he had to compromise with evil. In fact, Phakirmohan's social consciousness was tinged with a realization of the operation of evil in man's dispensation - a belief which grew out of the uncertain times in which he lived, and which he shared with Radhanath.

But probably the best part of Phakirmohan's work was his use of language. It was almost, to borrow a comparison from English, Shakespearean, and in contrast to the Sanskrit-based polite language used by Radhanath and Madhusudan, it has the remarkable vitality of a colloquial speech - full of proverbs, saws and visual images which had been nourished by a 1000-year-old ripe village-culture. Phakirmohan's novels and stories, and to a large extent his autobiography, set a new and strong trend towards the portrayal of social realism, and his strong sense of humour coupled with subtle irony, provided a completely new structure to Oriya prose - discursive and analytical, and yet highly suggestive and poetic, and which set a new model in writing to be followed by future writers.

Ramsankar Roy

Ramsankar's (1858-1917) main concern was drama though initially he had serialized an incomplete novel in a contemporary journal. Not that there was no drama before, but it was mostly at a folk-level, and drama as a western literary form - a viable form of entertainment and social attitudes, which had already come to stay in Bengal, was not there in Orissa. In fact it was the staging of Bengali dramas in late seventies that prompted Ramsankar to experiment on Oriya drama, particularly for the educated people in the towns, and his first drama entitled *Kanchi Kavery* was written and staged in 1880, when he was 22. Thereafter, for about 37 years, till his death, though professionally he was a pleader at Cuttack, drama writing, staging and even acting at times, came to be his most serious engagement, and drama, as had been the cases with poetry and fiction, came to be established as an important new literary form at the turn of the century, the credit for which, one may note, solely goes to the efforts of Ramsankar.

Ramsankar was born, like Radhanath, in a domiciled Bengali family that had earlier settled at Asureswar in Cuttack district. His was a well-known and affluent family, and his elder brother Gourisankar had already earned reputation as the editor of *Utkal Dipika*, the most famous periodical newspaper of the time. Apart from *Kanchi Kavery*, Ramsankar's other dramas were *Banabala* (The Forest Maid, 1882), *Kalikala* (Evil Times, 1883), *Rama Banabasa* (The Banishment of Ram, 1891), *Budhabara* (The Old Bridegroom, 1892), *Kansabaddha* (The Killing of Kansa, 1893), *Bisamodak* (Dose of Poison, 1900), *Yugadharma* (The Rules of Time, 1902), *Kanchanmali* (Kanchanmali, 1904), *Chaitanyalila* (The Lila of Chaitanya, 1906), *Lilabati* (Lilabati, 1912), *Badaloka* (The Rich Man, 1913), *Viswajajna* (The Global Sacrifice, 1916), *Ramaviseka* (The Coronation of Rama, 1917), a total of 14 plays. In addition, he wrote two novels, *Saudamini* (Saudamini, 1878), which was serialized in a journal and was left unfinished, and

Bibasini (Bibasini, 1891).

The plays had different modes, such as comic, romantic and satiric etc. The subject matters too, were taken from different sources. Thus the themes of *Rama Banabas*, *Kansabaddha* and *Ramavisek* were taken from the epics and Puranas; *Kanchi Kavery* was based on history and legend; *Viswajajna* was concerned with contemporary national movement and Bengal-partition; and *Banabala* was a successful adaptation of Shakespeare's *Tempest* in Orissan history and environment. But plays such as, *Kalikala*, *Budhabara*, *Badaloka* etc., a total 8 plays, had serious social content and attitudes, and were largely motivated towards social reform. Thus *Kalikala* was on the evils of drinking, *Budhabara* was on the evils of an old man marrying a young girl, *Bisamodak* on the fall of an aristocratic zamindar family due to idleness and indebtedness, *Yugadharma* on the victimization of a farmer by the Government and through evil designs of the rich, and *Lilabati* on how to glorify and improve one's own country through reforms and sacrifices. Even plays with mythological themes were not free of this motivation towards social reform. At a time, when with the advent of Western education and consequent opening of mental horizons, an awareness towards social and otherwise reforms was fast developing, particularly with the educated people of the towns. Ramsankar's plays contributed to that significantly. His social analysis had two aspects. One was a bitter criticism of whatever was not good and beneficial from the point of view of man's position in the society. The second was a serious concern how best social reforms can be achieved. Thus such contemporary issues as harmful consequences of drinking, bad effects of caste division, and the social ugliness of sexual permissiveness of the rich etc. were joined with the spread of female education, development of industry and eradication of untouchability, as different aspects of social motivation. In addition, he put in songs in his plays, used blank verse and prose for effect, adopted interesting details from

outside dramas, and on the whole made drama a viable form of entertainment and serious discussion, and the standards he set influenced Oriya drama for the next three decades.

Kanchi Kavery, which was Ramsankar's first play and immediately established his reputation as a dramatist, continues even now as his most popular play. It was the only historical play that he wrote. though liberally tinged with a popular legend. The history refers to the 15th century Oriya emperor Purusottam Dev, and his victory over king Narasingh Salva of Kanchi, in the south, and his marriage with Narasimha's daughter. The legend is about how Purusottam won his victory with the divine help given by Lord Jagannath and Lord Balavadra of Puri, and provides Purusottam's marriage with Narasimha's daughter with a romantic aura. Considering the context of the time (late 19th century) the treatment of the story had certain popular dimensions, such as, a pride in resurgent Oriya nationalism and a reflection of popular devotion towards Lord Jagannath and Lord Balavadra, the supreme divinities in Oriya consciousness, Apart from that it was an attempt to respond to the changed taste of the time, away from the crudities and earthiness of folk- drama. In fact, *Kanchi Kavery* initiated a series of plays on the same story, the latest being Kalicharan Pattnaik's *Abhijan* (1946), and in spite of its structural indebtedness to many sources, such as Sanskrit drama, English drama and folk drama, it was the first, most successful Oriya drama on the stage, and has continued to hold its own even through changes of taste and attitudes.

Bibasini, Ramasankar's only completed novel, was a good example of his competence in creative prose. It was one of earliest works in Oriya in that genre. A fine documentation of the times, it portrayed the uncertain chaotic and Marahatta-dominated later 18th century Orissa - a love romance coupled with a Robin Hood type adventure and with a singular knack in portraying women characters (the title is taken from the name of the heroine). As a

first attempt at novel - writing it was remarkable. It is a pity it was cut short off permanently, and Ramsankar never went back to novels afterwords.

(iii)

Radhanath's immense talent exerted a good deal of influence on many of his contemporaries, and he along with Madhusudan, Phakirmohan and Ramsankar, created an atmosphere of great enthusiasm and creativity, a fertilizing time for other talents to grow and establish themselves. Two most noted in this respect were two poets, who earned reputation as good as Radhanath's own. They were Gangadhar Meher (1862-1924) and Nandakishor Bal (1875-1928), one 14 years younger to Radhanath, the other 27 years, and whereas Gangadhar mostly wrote in poetry, Nandakishor, in addition to poetry, also wrote a novel and literary criticism and essays.

Gangadhar was born at Barapalli, in Sambalpur district, in a weaver's family with modest means. He did not have much formal education, though he self-educated himself in Sanskrit, Bengali, Hindi and ancient Oriya poetry. Professionally he was in much demand by local zamindars in matters of writing, accounts and law; who too, had good deal of respect for him and his writing. Gangadhar had one job or the other, mostly at Barapalli, or around Barapalli, beginning from 1885 till 1917 and lived in modest comfort and ease.

Gangadhar's first important narrative poem was *Indumati* (Indumati, 1893) which dealt with the story of Aja of Ayodhya and his queen Indumati. Subsequently he wrote *Kichakabadha* (The Killing of Kichaka, 1903), *Padmini* (Padmini, 1911), *Tapaswini* (The Lady Ascetic, 1914), and *Pranayaballari* (The Creepers of Love, 1915). All these were long, narrative poems or Kavyas, like Radhanath's, who had remained a distant inspiration for him and whose approval he had sought for and got for the first

two, when Radhanath was living. But Gangadhar's poetry did not have the sophistication and ingenuity, one finds in Radhanath's poetry and in comparison it was simpler, more musical and in manner and approach more inclined towards ancient Oriya poetry. At the same time, whereas Radhanath largely borrowed his themes from the West, Gangadhar's stories came from Indian mythology and Sanskrit literature.

Indumati was in two parts and the story was taken from *Raghuvansa* of Kalidas, a story of love and happiness, ending in sorrow. But many local details were added to it, including references to nature's beauties and moral instructions related to life's goodness and durability, and the whole Kavya was written in a musical raga, in a simple, racy language. The story of the next Kavya *Kichakabadha* was taken from the *Mahabharat*, and dealt with the well-known story of the advances of Kichak to Draupadi, the famous Pandava Queen, when the Pandavas were living in incognito in the kingdom of Virat, and the death of Kichak at the hands of Bhimasen, the second Pandava. It was in seven cantos, and full of imaginative details related to nature's beauty and dramatic turn of events. The language, as before, was simple, racy and musical. The next book *Tapaswini* was the poet's best work, and one of the best poetical works in Oriya literature, and has also been one of the most popular. It was in 11 cantos, in extremely lyrical and adorable language and dealt with the life of Sita during her banishment at Valmiki's hermitage. Although the general structure was taken from the *Ramayana*, it was largely an original work. This originality was seen in the arrangement of sequences in the cantos, in imagining nature as a living being, and in assessing Sita's feelings in an atmosphere of deep pathos and compassion. This is how the poet universalizes Sita's sorrows when she was left alone in the forest;

As she cried the wind stopped
And the agony spread form land to water,

The waves of Ganga ceased to flow
Not a single leaf stirred
Not a single creeper moved.

In short, the attempt to portray Sita, with her immense physical and moral beauty, not just as an ideal of womanhood, but as a strong feminine character who could not only face the challenges of adversity, but had the ability to rise beyond it, and at the same time as an integrated being with the nature and environment, was singularly remarkable, and accounted for its immense popularity. In *Pranayaballari*, Gangadhar's last published narrative poem, the poet once again took his story from Kalidas - from the drama *Sakuntala*. The poem was in 7 cantos, and the emphasis was on love - the birth of love in Sakuntala, its flowering, the refusal by Dusmant, and the love's final fulfilment in the reunion of the two. As the work was in verse, the poet added many details keeping an eye on poetic grace and lyrical structure. Its popularity in Gangadhar's poetry is next only to *Tapaswini*. *Padmini* was the poet's only historical work, and it dealt with the ordeals of Padmini, the queen of Chittor. It was in five cantos and incomplete.

Besides, Gangadhar also wrote a number of short poems, some of them very short and on casual topics. Three collections may be noted here. They are, 1. *Kabita Kallol* (Waves of Poetry, 1912) consisting of 5 poems, dealing with moonlit night, the spring time, and the rains etc., 2. *Arghyathali* (The Plate of Offering, 1918) consisting of 39 poems, some of them very short, on assorted topics, and 3. *Kabitamala* (The Garland of Poetry, 1923) consisting of 29 poems. The literary merit of these poems, particularly in comparison to his longer narrative poems, is uneven, and among these a few poems can be singled out as better than the rest. These are, first of all, such poems as *Bhakti* (Devotion), *Amrutaya* (Full of Nectar), *Madhumaya* (Full of Sweetness) and *Bharasa* (Support) etc. which have a sincere note of religious devotion and

contemplation; and secondly poems like *Utkal Bharatinka Ukti* (The Speech of Utkal Bharati), *Bharati Bhavana* (The Thoughts of Bharati), *Bharati Rodana* (The Cry of Bharati) and *Utkal Laxmi* (The Goddess Laxmi of Utkal) which are patriotic and nationalistic in tone and fervour. Particularly, *Bharati Bhavana*, which was written towards the end of 1922, in the context of the freedom movement under Gandhiji's leadership, was a veiled attack on the contemporary British administration of India, and *Utkal Bharatinka Ukti*, which was written in the background of a script-reform agitation (1914) was a passionate plea to stick to one's own mother-tongue as one should always stick to one's own mother at whatever cost may be. Gangadhar's talent is homely and intimate, and to one coming from the intense poetic heat of Radhanath it provides a cool relaxation.

Some examples would be appropriate. Thus *Bhakti* from *Arghyathali* is a poem of great devotion and submission to the supreme being of all creations :

Oh, you life of the universe
I can't call you sea of kindness
As a drop of your kindness is an ocean,
I can't count the beads in your worship
As millions of planets are the beads in your string.

Or, in a different vein, in *Utkal Bharatinka Ukti*, from the same book, Mother Utkal requests her sons to treat her gently, and to be aware of her dignity, and also the dignity of the language she speaks:

Cover me with such cloth
That does not pain my body,
Give me such ornaments
That do not shame me....
Innumerable springs of Andes mountains
Cannot flood your land,
Who will cool the heat of your heart

Unless my holy streams flow over ...

Or, still differently, from the Fourth Canto of *Tapaswini*, an extremely popular passage, where the Dawn pays her obeisance to the great queen Sita at Valmiki's hermitage :

Greatly thirsting at heart to see Sita
Came Dawn, looking like a blooming lotus, gracefully,
With dews like diamonds in the leaves of her palms
And waiting in the courtyard outside Sita's room,
She said in the cuckoo's voice
"Oh, Chaste Lady, the night is over,
Show yourself." ....
The wind sang, the bumble bees played on harp
The dear cubs danced at the Dawn's direction,
And doves sang eulogies
And the black bird came as the chief eulogist
And said in a sweet, graceful tone
"Oh, great queen, the night is over,
Wake up." ....

Nandakishor Bal was born at Kusupur, an affluent village on the river Birupa, in the Cuttack district, and in an affluent family. Originally he was Jena and his name was Rasananda, which were later changed to Bal and Nandakishor respectively, through adoption into aunt's family (father's sister). He had good formal education, passed his B.A. from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, in 1899 and B.T. (Teachers' Training) from David Hare Training College, Calcutta, in 1910. He joined Government Service (Education Department, Orissa Division) in 1903, where he worked intermittently as a teacher and educational supervisor, till 1927, when he retired in the position of Inspector of Schools. His job enabled him to travel widely and to acquire an intimate knowledge of Orissa's rural life, apart from the intimacy and great love he had for his own village Kusupur.

Nandakishor mostly wrote poetry, where he excelled, though

he also earned reputation as an essayist and critic, and laterly, as a novelist. In addition to three long, narrative poems, in the manner of Radhanath, entitled *Sita Banabasa* (Sita's Banishment, 1901), *Krushna Kumari* (Krushna Kumari, 1901) and *Sarmistha* (Sarmistha, 1916), where stories were taken from mythology and Rajsthan history and emphasis was put on sorrowful life, he wrote a large number of lyrics and short poems which were collected in a number of volumes. They were, chronologically, *Pallichitra* (Rural Sketches, 1898/1908), *Nirjharini* (The Stream, 1900), *Charuchitra* (Sweet Pictures, 1902), *Basant Kokila* (The Cuckoo of the Spring, 1902), *Nirmalya* (Offerings, 1903), *Janmabhumi* (Motherland, 1903/1908/1924), *Pravat Sangita* (The Songs of the Morning, 1912), *Sandhya Sangita* (The Songs of the Evening), *Nanabaya Gita* (Nursery Rhymes, 1915) and *Tarangini* (The River, 1916). The only novel that he wrote entitled *Kanaklata* (Kanaklata) was initially written in 1913 and was left unfinished. It was laterly completed in 1925. It depicted contemporary social situation and social issues, and gave a graphic account of Oriya rural and cultural life. The essays and criticism that he wrote, were written occasionally and intermittently throughout his career.

Nandakishor was the first ever Oriya poet to give a significant shape and voice to Orissa's rural landscape, particularly as it obtained in the coastal districts of Orissa about 100 years ago - a lively environment, physically and culturally, as well as in terms of nature and human variety and habitation. It was a documentation of both good and bad, and liberally used a language at the nursery-rhyme level - a poetic preoccupation which has hardly been surpassed even now, and for which he was fondly called 'Palli Kabi' (The Poet of Rural Life). Many of these poems were collected in *Pallichitra*, though many others could be found scattered in other volumes too. That is, going back to rural life again and again was almost a continuous habit with him. Thus, this is how the poet shows his awareness of the night in the village-

"The night-wind carries the song/ The night groans / The ugly bark of the jackals floats from the heath/ And the children wake up in fright / Their dreams gone"... ; or the evening in the rains - "Fields, groves, roads, ferry, every where / Everywhere water filled/ And from a distance came the noise of songs/ Of farmers and cow herds/ Smoke curled from the wet-roof of thatched houses / And the cry of foxes floated from outside the village/ In a minute the evening vanished/ Darkness came/ And people returned to their homes anxiously. "... ; or the morning in the winter, on the village road -"The village maids return along the road/ Their morning-bathing finished in the ponds / Shivering, talking in whispers/"; or, apart from these, the feel of nursery rhyme sung to children to induce them to sleep :

The colourful paddy ripes in the field,
Oh my soul, oh, ho........
Go, and sleep in the field where paddy is plenty.
Ripe paddy overbrims the calmy cell
Fragrant paddy drowns with sweetness all around
Oh my soul, oh ho........
Ragi ripes in autumn
Go, and sleep in the field where ragi is plenty.

Nandakishor's total poetic output was cansiderable and it had many dimensions. Though his preoccupation with rural life constituted a significant part of his total oeuvre, yet it had other aspects, equally important and to be noted, many of which had strong, contemporary ring. They were, first of all, a social awareness which showed particularly the poet's unhappiness at the conservative social customs, manners and superstitions, and a desire that these may be changed to better, adjusting to new age and new ideas. Secondly, there was political awareness and a general unhappiness at the contemporary condition of Orissa and of the Oriyas, and related patriotic sentiments as seen in many references to places in Orissa, and in the character of 'Utkalmata'

or Mother Orissa. Thirdly, the poems exhibited strong lyrical emotions, particularly with references to love and nature - an intimate emotion of love and a great joy in thinking of the beloved, coupled with an equal intimacy with nature and nature's beauty, The references are to changes of season, hours of the day, and to singing birds, particularly the cuckoo. Lastly, the poems showed an underlying meditative approach, an awareness of mortality and passing time on the one hand, and on the other, at the same time, a feeling for permanence and mystic contemplative strength. These elements were not always separated from each other, though there were poems that dealt separately with each one of them. But as a whole they could be seen as different layers in the same poem, motivated towards an expression of a strong complex poetic attitude - a singular poetic power at the turn of the century, that looked forward to such poetry in the following decades.

A good example that way would be the title-poem from *Basant Kokila*. The poem begins with a reference to the sun rising at the end of a spring night, and to the stream that flows by the distant village, where in the cottages by the stream, the women were still asleep. When the cuckoo sings in such a cool and quiet morning, the sweet melody like the water of the divine Ganga, floods everywhere with sweetness, and in the distant loneliness, the message goes to the sweet lady of blue and liquid eyes, whose body shivers, young breast palpitates, and who gets seized by a violent youthful passion. Then addressing the cuckoo,

> If my song can have your sweetness,
> If it can have a divine glory
> Crossing the limits of worldly desires
> Roaming in the vast land of imagination
> In the blue clear sky, away from the dust of the world
> Then I can sing along with you
> That divine sweet song,
> And can spread that beauty of love,

And the great past glory of my motherland,
That may awake Mother Utkal from sleep
As your song wakes up women in the cottages.
But Lo ! false hopes,
The language of my heart is muddy, stained,
Like the water of Karmanasa.
Oh, Cuckoo,
Your melody is like the water of divine Ganga
Which the divine women drink.

Nandakishor's use of language was both colloquial and idiomatic on the one hand, and Sanskritized, complicated with images and rhetorical flourishes on the other. Particularly the poems with socio-political awareness and rural context, had largely idiomatic and conversational language, whereas the narrative and story-poems or those having meditative frame, or even lyrical emotions, had the arrangement of educated and sophisticated speech. But on the whole, the poet's intimate understanding of life, particularly of rural life and rural nature, singled him out as an independent poetic talent in the total, overpowering tradition of Radhanath's poetry..

Kanaklata was Nandakishor's only novel, which he wrote in two instalments, in 1913 and 1925. The title of the novel was taken from the name of the heroin, a young woman from an affluent family in an affluent coastal village, strongly reminiscent of Nandankishor's own village and its surroundings. The young woman was not formally educated, but well-educated informally at home, as was the custom at the time, and the novel depicts her growing-up period, her marriage, and post-marriage days of happiness and sorrow, along with the accounts of many other persons she came in contact with - a typical portrait of family surroundings. Basically, *Kanaklata* was a social novel that depicted the ongoing socio-cultural changes from tradition-bound conservative attitudes to newer and freer dispensation - an

interesting departure from Phakirmohan where the attention was more on probing analysis. In a different way, *Kanaklata* was a continuation of Nandakishor's deep concern for rural life and rural conditions. What was portrayed in pieces of poetry, Nandakishor tried to collate them together in the length of a novel. A pertinent example is when Dhananjoy, the hero of the novel, went as a guest to the village of his friend Rajendra, the brother of his future wife Kanaklata - almost a replica of Nandakishor's own village on the river Birupa :

> Once the meeting ended, Dhananjoy accompanied Rajendra to go round the village. It was finely located- the beautiful sight of blue hills at the distant horizon, the sweet rippling noise of the river, the half-ripe crops stretching afar, the unending shadow of creepers and the sweet autumn sky, the sight of blooming colourful lotus in the ponds and the swans swimming, and above all the sweet youthful maidens as beautiful as the blooming roses bathing in grace. The mind of Dhananjay was seized with a miraculous dream. He forgot that he had come as a guest to Rajendra's place.

In short, though *Kanaklate* was a lone novel by Nandkishor, yet it was a landmark creation in the emerging genre after Phakirmohan.

The other noted writer who grew up in Radhanath-tradition and to a large extent popularised the same, was Chintamoni Mohanty (1867-1943), poet and novelist, younger contemporary of Radhanath and Phakirmohan, who took both as his models, Radhanath in poetry and Phakirmohan in novel. He was born in the village Kulamulai in Bhadrak subdivision (now district). His father, a law-practitioner (Muktiyar) died when Chintamoni was 12, and henceforward his life was a continuous struggle against extremely adverse situations, both physical illness and monetary poverty. He discontinued his studies at the vernacular level (Upper Primary), and picked up teaching jobs in the vernacular schools to

earn his livelihood. But his was a rare soul, completely devoted to literature and literary pursuits. This earned him wide recognition from all around, including from such persons as Radhanath and Phakirmohan, and kings such as, the Kings of Jeypore and Parlakhemundi, particularly the latter, who financially supported him with an annuity for many years. Chintamoni's primary interest was in poetry, the first volume of which, entitled *Mohini* (Enchantress) was published in 1901. Thereafter, till 1937, his poetical works numbered about fifty. These included Kavyas based on mythological and historical accounts, such as *Sisupal Baddha* (The Killing of Sisupal, 1909), *Vikramaditya* (1916), *Suvadra* (1920) and *Sri Mukunda Dev* (1923) etc., and descriptive accounts related to places, rivers or mountains such as *Dharakot Darsan* (On Seeing Dharakot, 1909), *Salandi* (1911), *Mahendra* (1918), and *Ghumsar Kavya* (1936) etc. Additionally, he had a number of short personal poems collected in volumes such as *Patrapushpa* (Leaves and Flowers), *Sandhyatara* (The Evening Star) and *Kalpanakunja* (The Arbour of Imagination) etc., as well as miscellaneous short poems motivated towards manners, moral education and prayer to God.

Chintamoni had, like Radhanath, a remarkable sensitiveness to nature, and also like Radhanath and Madhusudan, was strongly motivated by patriotic sentiments, and had keen desire to focus on aspects of heroism and idealism in human character. A good example would be *Salandi,* the long, descriptive poem on the river Salandi that flows by Bhadrak- "Oh you ! Where herons fly/Where clean water is full of fishes/Oh the eldest daughter of Meghason and queen of streams/Famous in beauty and virtue/Your water sparkles like glass/Clean like the heart of a saint." Or, from *Ghumsar Kavya*, the picture of the evening, generally modelled on similar pictures in Radhanath's *Chilika :*

The sun sets over the distant hill
Ah, how attractive, how wonderful !

The western sky is smeared with gold
Like a golden scarf thrown round a lady,
And the golden rays of the setting sun
Settle on the heads of the hills and trees,
And the sun in glee
Adorns the heads of all with golden crowns,
And birds drowned in golden rays
Rise in the sky singing happily
Their faces glowing in the setting sun.

Chintamoni wrote his first novel entitled *Tankagachha* (The Money-Tree) in 1920. Subsequently he wrote four more novels, *Jugalmatha* (The Twin Mathas, 1924), *Bulaphakir* (The Mendicant, 1924), *Sanisapta* (Saturn's Time, 1933) and *Rupa Chudi* (Silver Bangles). The novels deal variously with different aspects of contemporary society, particularly its seamy sides and people's propensity to practise hypocrisy, chicanery and fraud on each other, along with motivations towards idealism and good living. Thus whereas *Tankagachha* deals with greed for money, and *Jugalmatha* with hypocrisy in religious practices, *Sanisapta* shows the fragility in superstition and high humanistic idealism, and *Bulaphakir* the happiness in married life. On the whole, though Chintamoni wrote under the continuing glow of Radhanath and Phakirmohan, yet he wrote prolifically and established himself as an important creative voice that earned admiration and respect.

(*iv*)

Phakirmohan did not write the first novel in Oriya. The credit goes to *Padmamali* (Padmamali, 1888) by Umesh Chandra Sarkar (1857-1914). It was followed by Ramsankar's *Bibasini* (1891), about which references have already been made, and *Bhima Bhuinya* (Bhima Bhuyan, 1898, published 1908) by Gopal Ballav Das (1860-1914), younger brother of Madhusudan Das, and himself an able administrator. Sarkar was born at Puri in a

domiciled Bengali family and professionally worked in the managerial cadre in the ex-feudatory States of Orissa. *Padmamali* had elements of adventure and romance, in the line of contemporary Bengali novels, in historical context, and highlighted exploitation, torture, misgovernment, greed and selfishness on the one hand, and the need of social ethics, morality and faith on God on the other. The story was based on some real incidents that happened in the ex-feudatory State of Nilgiri, near Balasore, in 1835, wherein Padmamali, a good-natured, beautiful young woman from an affluent family in a nearby village, was abducted by powerful officials of the king and was finally rescued through interference and warfare by the person she loved, to whom she finally got married, In the process, the history of Nilgiri State, as well as contemporary socio-political situations, including the interference of the then British Magistrate of Balasore, have been put on record and incorporated in the background. The novel provided interesting reading and in spite of its defects in organisation and language, opened up a new area for the interested reading public.

Bhima Bhuyan also scored a first, the first Oriya novel about the tribals of mid and western Orissa, a tribal community called 'Bhuyan'. Gopalballav was a high ranking government official. He worked as the Personal Assistant to the then British Commissioner of the ex-feudatory States of Orissa, and had the opportunity to move around with his bosses through the remote, tribal-inhabited, mountainous areas of Orissa, and in his own language, the book was a "flower of the jungle, picked up from the mountainous regions inhabited by the primitive Bhuyans", and hoped that it would provide "some way of thought to the poets, politicians and philosophers." *Bhima Bhuyan* like the earlier *Padmamali* too, had elements of adventure and romance in a historical context, and also focussed on social inequality, greed, torture, as well as on goodness and morality. The story was about the travails of a tribal youth Bhima, who was destined to go through

the spouts of misfortune and melancholy; but was finally redeemed by marrying the young woman she loved, crossing almost insurmountable social barriers and positions. Though a bit flabby and loose in construction, yet the way it focussed on tribal situation at a time when it was not the order of the day, was singularly remarkable, and could be given the credit of anticipating (by about 50 years) the famous 'tribal novels' of Gopinath Mohanty.

As in fiction, so also in drama, though Ramsankar was a major playwright and gave a forceful lead to Oriya drama at the turn of the century, he is not credited as the first playwright. This credit goes to Jaganmohan Lal (1828-1913), who worked as a deputy collector under the Government of Orissa, and belonged to an established zamindar family of Mahanga, in the Cuttack district. He began his career as a poet but all along he had a keen interest in drama and set up one of the earliest theatres of Orissa, named 'Radhakant Theatre', in his own village (1875), and took initiative to stage a number of plays, including his own plays. He was a reformist in social life (he got his widowed daughter remarried) and was bitterly satirical of contemporary social superstitions. His first play *Babaji* (The Mendicant), credited as the first modern Oriya play, also the first Oriya play modelled on the Western tradition, was staged in 1877, three years before Ramsankar's *Kanchi Kavery* was staged. The focus was on a good-natured, religious-minded mendicant, who though insulted by the local landlord and his people, yet opted to stay in a grove outside the village, and tried to reform people through good, moral advice. But structurally it dealt with a number of social ills, including drinking, adultery and superstitions in a satirical vein - a distinct motivation towards contemporary social realism. Lal's second play *Sati* (The Chaste Woman) was published in 1886, nine years after *Babaji* and it too dealt with social ills, including the tyranny of the rich and the sexual permissiveness of the ex-State's rulers, as before, in the satirical vein. The focus was on the travails of a

young beautiful devoted housewife, who in spite of all her attempts to keep herself away from the lust of the local ruler, could not do so, and had to commit suicide at the end. Between the two, *Sati* was rated as better, yet both the plays that Lal wrote, had some initial virtues, such as, use of realistic dialogues, use of songs as a sop to popular taste, creation of round characters with an emphasis on idealism, and most pre-eminently, to create awareness against social misdeeds, misdemeanour, and flaws in character and in living conditions of people.

The other dramatist of the time to be noted was Kampal Mishra (1875-1927), who too, like Ramsankar and Lal, took up social themes, and castigated social ills, but couched them, as have been done earlier, in historical and mythological frames. His three extant plays are *Sitabibaha* (The Marriage of Sita, 1899), *Harischandra* (Harischandra, 1902), both adaptation's of mythological stories and events, and *Basantlatika* (Basantlatika, 1913), a work of adventure and palace-intrigue, in an assumed historical set-up. Mishra used contemporary colloquial language, based his scenes on contemporary realities, showed a non-sentimental and realistic approach, and along with his partly satirical and reformistic attitude, contributed to the strengthening of the superstructure of Oriya drama at the initial stage. But it may also be noted that interest for new Oriya drama based on Western-model and with a direct link-up with contemporary Bengali drama, and with distinct social motivations, was slowly catching up. This was in spite of the fact that in the countryside and particularly with the rural folk, the 'other stream', the folk opera, popularly called 'Jatra', (Yatra) with such exponents as Gopal Das (1877-1939), Baishnab Pani (1882-1956) and Balakrushna Mohanty (1900-1958) was more popular and providing the main lines of entertainment. Even theatres were established outside Cuttack district (administratively most important district at the time), in such far-flung places as Kharial (ex-State) in the Western

Orissa and Parlakhemundi (another ex-State) in the Southern Orissa, patronized by the respective kings, such as Vira Vikram Dev and Padmanav Narayana Dev, who also wrote a number of plays themselves and established permanent theatre-halls, Vikram Theatre and Padmanav Rangalaya respectively, to get them staged. There were other places too, such as at Nilgiri, Nayagarh, Kanika, Jeypore and Bolangir etc., all ex-State areas, where under the patronage of respective kings theatre-halls were established and plays were staged, the purpose in most being social reform and social upliftment, A great promoter of such awareness at the time was Gourisankar Roy, the editor of *Utkal Dipika*, whose interest, involvement and persuasion substantially contributed to the cause.

But it was in Bhikari Charan Pattanaik (1878-1962) that Ramsankar-tradition in drama was ably continued. Bhikari Charan was a pleader at Cuttack like Ramsankar, and even for sometime he worked as a junior to Ramsankar. He was equally motivated by social reform and nationalistic spirit, and a firm believer, under Madhusudan Das's inspiration, in co-operation and collaboration in social activities. He wrote plays related to historical and social themes as well as on socio-political problems, as also on purely imaginative topics. His first play *Katak Bijaya* (The Conquest of Cuttack) was published in 1901, and subsequently by 1925, most of his other plays were published and staged widely, and brought a good deal of popularity and recognition to the dramatist. The plays were, *Adbhuta Adarsha* (Strange Ideals, 1909), *Nandikeswari* (Nandikeswari, 1915), *Ratnamali* (Ratnamali, 1915), *Samsar Chitra* (The Portraits of the World, 1915,) *Sushila* (Sushila, 1915) *Jautuka* (Dowry, 1924), and *Raja Purusottam* (Emperor Purusottam, 1925). *Katak Bijaya* which was first staged in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, was in a way, a historical drama, and dealt with the conquest of Cuttack, the then headquarters of Orissa administration, by the British, in 1803, and heralded the occupation of Orissa by the British. The play had a lot of youthful

exuberance and patriotic sentiment, incorporated blank verse, both comic and tragic situations, and also songs in its structure, and became quite popular, and established Bhikari Charan as an important dramatist. His two other historical plays were *Nandikeswari* and *Raja Purusottam* that dealt with historical legends of Orissa's history, and *Ratnamali* written in blank verse, was an imaginative account of a princess's attempts to recover her lost kingdom and her love. But probably the best play of Bhikari Charan was *Samsar Chitra*. Its theme was social, related to evil effects of dowry, and in a way a strong castigation against the new-fangled Western educated society. The reaction of Phakirmohan Senapati, the novelist, when he received a copy of the book, was interesting. He wrote- "I have received a copy. Though ill, I read it in one breath. Strange, how you have torn the society with the nails of your ten fingers." Bhikari Charan, as pointed out earlier, followed Ramsankar as a model, expressed strong patriotic sentiments, and aimed at social exposition and reform, and beginning from 1901, when his first play was published, and by which time most of Ramsankar's plays were out, dominated Oriya dramatic scene for about two decades.

(v)

Significant change also came in non-fiction prose, particularly in essay, of discursive, descriptive and expository nature. First of all, it became substantially different from the type of prose that was written earlier in the 19th century, and was popularly known as 'missionary prose' and secondly, it developed its identity as a completely new genre at par with poetry, fiction and drama, and provided an eloquent expression to the many changes in the social and national perspective in the later part of the 19th century Orissa. A major support to such writing was provided by the large number of Oriya journals that came out in the last three decades of the 19th century, and continued even after

that. We have seen how as an aftermath of the great famine of 1866 *Utkal Dipika* was started by Gourisankar Roy, and subsequent to that, about 50 journals, many of which were purely literary, came out by 1900. Most of the leading writers of the time were involved with these journals either as writers, or otherwise as editors and organisers, and the topics they flashed in their pages were many, ranging from literary criticism and discussions to such areas as related to education, religion, human character, caste-conflict and social upliftment etc., and on the whole, established non-fiction Oriya prose with a good deal of viability. At one level it was idiomatic, colloquial and alert, and at another, sophisticated and scholarly, and apart from the writers of the period - poets, dramatists and fiction writers, many others took to prose as their sole mode of expression. Thus we have, at the first instance, Radhanath, Madhusudan, Phakirmohan, Ramsankar and Nandakishor etc., and secondly, such other personalities who concentrated on prose as Gourisankar Roy, Biswanath Kar, Krushna Prasad Chaudhury (1865-1927), Shyamsundar Rajguru (1866-1909), Nilamoni Vidyaratna (1867-1923), Gopinath Nanda (1869-1924), Mrutunjoy Rath (1882-1924) and Tarini Charan Rath (1883-1922), who together gave Oriya prose a distinct and modern shape in the early years of the modern period.

Radhanath Roy as has been pointed out, wrote a moralistic ethical tract, a fine piece of discursive prose, entitled *Bibeki* Thematically it has links with his later poem *Darbar* which was a social satire, and aimed at improving man's morals and manners. *Bibeki* aimed at doing that in a simpler format. Thus this is how he speaks of man's estimate of oneself- "In case somebody thinks you good for nothing, stupid, it is not proper to get angry with him. But many may not agree with the justness of this contention. In fact anybody whose conscience has not achieved necessary understanding and foresight, will not be able to appreciate what I say..." and differently, in the same vein- "The leg of a horse is tied

to a tree, somebody standing there goes on whipping it because it does not run. You saw, you laughed, you also felt sorry. Leaving apart running well, that horse can't even walk. You often do like that. You do not understand the difficulties people suffer from, you only laugh...". Radhanath also wrote a travelogue, entitled *Bhramanakarir Patra.* (The Letter of a Traveller, 1889) mostly in factual, pedestrian prose- "Going for about two kosas from Rohila, we entered the Bamanda State, After going through the forest for sometime we first saw the Jualibandha village on the Brahmoni. It was a small village but very clean. We were astonished in seeing roads almost everywhere in the village."

Madhusudan was more specific. His purpose was largely educational (he wrote the first teacher-trainer tract in Oriya and edited an educational monthly) and the many prose pieces that he wrote were meant for students in the early school-years and remained as texts for many years. The primary purpose was to impart information, but that too, as in Radhanath, combined with a moralistic structure with an aim to improve men's manners and morals. But Madhusudan had also other aims, particularly to preach religious tolerance and to make men aware of their interest in spiritual values. Such essays were, *Bharatiya Samaj* (Indian Society, 1884), *Anant Ambhamanankar Adarsha* (Eternity is Our Ideal, 1885), *Purnadharma* (Complete Religion, 1887) and pre-eminently *Adhyatmatatwa Chinta* (Thoughts about Spiritualism, 1893) which in a way sums of his views about man's links with a higher spiritual entity - "There are two beautiful birds in the tree of life, one the human soul, the other the divine soul. Both are without shape, and beyond physical sensation. But one is small, limited, the other great, eternal... The soul shelters under the wings of the divine. It has no existence without this divinity. The soul and the divinity are wonderful friends". Madhusudan's prose was compact, sophisticated and developed both attitudes of intimacy and distance.

Ramasankar too, whose first love was drama, wrote in prose whenever occasions arose. Apart from a few novels with which he had begun his literary career, his nonfiction prose mostly consisted of such essays as related to the areas of religion and literary criticism. Some such essays were, *Veda O Dharma* (The Vedas and Religion), *Satyadharma* (Truthful Dharma), *Draupadi Bastraharana* (On Taking Away Draupadi's Clothes) etc. which related to some basics of Hindu religious revival, as well as discussion of what go to consist the heritage of religion. Differently, his literary essays referred to the general literary condition at the time and to his own literary activities and literary inspiration in particular. Such essays were, *Odia Bhasar Unnati* (Improvement of Oriya Language), *Senapati Phakirmohan*, *Odia Natak O Natakavinay* (Oriya Drama and Theatre) etc. as well as essay on Oriya script reform. On the whole Ramsankar's essays exhibited a serious tone of deliberation and discussion, and like Radhanath's and Madhusudan's were motivated by social purposes and educational and nationalistic spirit.

But it was Phakirmohan, among the elders, who really fine-tuned nonfiction prose. On the one hand he wrote on varieties of topics, such as, *Jogasastra* (On the Yoga) and *Prakruti* (Human Nature) etc. related to philosophical deliberations; *Sudra O Bedadhikar* (The Sudras and the Vedas) motivated towards social reform; *Srikshetrare Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* (Sri Chaitanya at Puri), and *Balasore Bandarare Olandaj Jati* (The Portugees at Balasore), historical accounts; *Utkal Bhasar Bhuta O Bhabisyata* (The Past and the Future of Oriya Language), *Kabi Gopalkrushna Pattanaik* (Gopal Krushna Pattanaik Poet), *Kabi Michael Madhusudan O Meghanad Badha* (Michael Madhusudan, the Poet, and Meghanad Badha), etc. related to literary discussions; and an interesting, witty, social satire, a belletristic account, *Nananka Panji* (The Gentleman's Almanac). In these, as the motivations vary, the styles vary from free colloquial to compact sophistication,

and the tone from serious deliberation to light humour.

But the acme of Phakirmohan's non-fiction writing was his *Atmajibani* (autobiography). It was posthumously published, but was serialized in instalments in journals in earlier years, and was an immediate hit as soon as it was published. There were many reasons for the book's success. First of all, it was not a dry as dust narrative. It was an extremely lively account, full of almost fiction-like ancedotes and suffused with a continuous stream of humour and wit. Besides, it had serious social motivation, and showed the rot, particularly in the ex-State areas where he had to work frequently as an administrator. Then, it was written in a racy, colloquial style, in a tone which was both engaging and detached. Thus this is how he reacted to the harrowing famine of 1866- "The daily labourers sold few plates they had of bell-metal and brass, and somehow eked out living as best as they could. By the end of Kartika, they all left homes and moved wherever they could, all alone. Male or female, father or son, they never met. They moved along from door to door, and begged. None had rice, nobody could give alms... By Phaguna, most of farmers, and almost all of vocational classes got scattered and munched indiscriminately whatever they could get. Whenever green leaves came up in tamarind trees, ten to twenty people rushed together to climb the trees, and like monkeys picked up the leaves. Whomsoever you look at, only bone and skin, and eyes sunk in the sockets. Plenty of young women from gentle families could be seen walking aimlessly along the roads clad in two or three cubit long, totally torn clothes, wrapped round their loins, and their symbol of motherhood, two pieces of skin, hung from their breasts." Differently, there are accounts that show keen sensitiveness and a strong sense for beauty. Thus this is how he narrates a boat journey in the river Mahanadi - "At times, towards afternoon, the boat used to rest at beautiful places. The shores extendend far, full of sand mounds. The hills stood afar, towards north, west and south,

like huge walls - the sun setting on the western hill top like a burning ingot of gold. And overhead innumerable birds clattered and flew towards the western hills. As if, in the west, at the foot of mountain-walls, the flow of Mahanadi ended. The silent, lonely village was away from all animate beings."

Nandakishor, whose poetic output was considerable and who, in addition, wrote a novel, also took to nonfiction prose seriously. His prose work can be divided into a few categories, such as first of all, essays of moralistic and instructional type, good examples being *Karma* (Work) and *Sangram O Jiban* (Struggles and Life); secondly, essays with social motivation, particularly social reform, such as, *Samajika Jatkinchit* (Social Few), dealing with widow remarriage, chastity, caste etc., and thirdly, biographical pieces, such as, accounts dealing with Madhusudan Rao, Phakirmohan Senapati, and Emperor Chandragupta etc. But best of Nandakishor's such writings, an area in which he made a mark and excelled many others, was literary criticism. Some good examples were his essays, entitled *Kabi Radhanath O Tadiya Kabita* (Poet Radhanath and his Poetry), which was a detail and comparative estimate of Radhanath Roy's poetry, and *Chhandamala* in two parts, which was an extensive discussion of Madhusudan Rao's poetry-collection, of the same name.

The potent influence on Nandakishor was, of course, nineteenth century British Romantic poetry and Romantic criticism. But his original approach and understanding were both vivid and impressive. Thus this is how he spoke on the nature of poetry - "Poetry which is immortal has three indications. First, it shows an extraordinary sensitiveness to nature. Second, appropriate poetic language. And thirdly, correct reflection of the poet's thoughts and feelings. Having these, the piece of poetry comes nearest to the original reality it portrays, provides an equal amount of delight, even at times, more than that one gets from the original.

Because, always the thing it describes affords greater pleasure than the reality on which it is based.... It is regrettable that in the midst of plenty of prose and poetry compositions in modern Orissa, poetry that can inspire emotion is rare. Skill in writing, cleverness in using language or decorative devices, are not enough to make a good poem. What would happen if a lifeless dead body is decorated with flowers ?" Differently, he had an early vision, to think of a common linguafranca for the whole of India, and in an essay entitled *Bharatar Bhabisyata Bhasa* (The Future Language of India, 1900) he argued forcefully in favour of Hindi. Nandakishor was alert both as a poet and a critic, and that was his significance at a time when this alertness was very much needed.

Apart from these leading creative writers, the number of powerful personalities who also used nonfiction prose as a suitable mode of expression, Gourisankar was one of the earliest. He was not a writer per se, but basically a dedicated social activist and a leader of the new cultural awakening, and *Dipika* at the initiative of Gourisankar, discussed topics ranging from Oriya language agitation, Oriya text book movement, Oriya old and new literatures, to religious tolerance, social reforms, need of nationalism, spread of education, and character of the youth etc., to topical situations as related to administrative improvement and efficiency etc., Exposure of social conditions was one of its main aims and the exposure with which it started discussing many pitfalls of the Government after the famine of 1866, it kept it up throughout its long existence.

In all these, Gourisankar was not only the leading spirit, but himself wrote and gave a shape to *Dipika*'s involvement. His prose was pithy, forceful and always carried a tone of sanity. One or two examples would be appropriate. This is how he wrote referring to the controversy between Bengali and Oriya - "In reality neither Oriya is derived from Bengali, nor Bengali from Oriya. Bengali, Oriya and Assamese are different branches of a tree,

grown from one root, different daughters of the same mother. The main tree has vanished in course of time, and the branches, due to their inherent strength, have been detached from their ancestry to grow into unique lives of their own. The attempt to put them forcibly in one body would be sure to fail....." (1870). Later, disapproving the apathy of people towards their mother-tongue, he almost spoke in the same vein - "Our mother-tongue is Oriya, even suckling babies know it. It is our duty to see how best we can improve the language. Whatever nations have climbed in the ladder of civilization, have all tried to enrich their mother-tongues, to the best of their ability. It is unfortunate we do not do that, we do the reverse...." (1878). Much later, the same sense of sanity could also be seen, when differently, he spoke of female education- "In comparison to male-education, that female-education is much less advanced, can be seen by everybody. If a boy is educated, he is sure to pick up a job or a profession, and would be earning for the family. Would it be done by a girl ? Why unnecessarily educate her ? This is said by many housewives, as well as by men. But when one considers it, it is clear that female education is in no way less important than the male education, may be more important. Male and female constitute the family, alternatively without a female there cannot be any family. Woman is primary in the act of creation, and to draw the cart of life both male and female should have equal strength." (1914)

Almost at par with Gourisankar, who edited *Dipika* for about 50 years, and provided unassailable viability to Oriya prose, Biswanath Kar, a close associate of Madhusudan Rao, and like him a Brahmo, edited *Utkal Sahitya,* the most influential literary journal of the time, and guided literary taste for about three generations. He belonged to an aristocratic Brahmin family (whose earlier generations had come from Maharastra) of village Mulabasanta on the river Birupa, about 40 kms from Cuttack, but like many others of his time, had settled in Cuttack. Madhusudan's

association not only inspired him to become a Brahmo, but many of Madhusudan's qualities of personality and writing, could be seen in Biswanath's own life and writing. Biswanath largely stuck to one form, that is, essay, both literary and otherwise, and though most of them were written in the pages of *Utkal Sahitya,* quite a few were published even earlier, in journals like *Utkal Prava* and *Sambalpur Hiteisini* and were collected in his first-ever book *Bibidha Prabandha* (Miscellaneous Essays, 1896). The book was an important landmark at the time. It had originally about 20 essays related to literature, and philosophical thoughts and social reform, some of which he replaced in later editions and added newer ones. The opinion of Radhanath Roy, poet, at the time the book was published, was interesting. It reads - "*Bibidha Prabandha* has a good number of essays that provoke thought and emotion. By reading these essays it is expected Oriya readers' vision, taste and manners will improve."

In addition to the essays in *Bibidha Prabandha,* Biswanath frequently wrote in the pages of *Utkal Sahitya,* almost continuously from 1896 to 1934, on varieties of topics taken from the large spectrum of contemporary Oriya life. The essays had remarkable reticence as well as scintillating intelligence, propriety and exposition, and cumulatively had a profound influence on essay-writing in the first three decades of the century. Thus this is what he said on the capacity to think independently - "You may read thousands of books, listen to innumerable pieces of advice, commit to memory all wisdom of the earth, yet without the capacity to think about, it would not be possible to attain humanness. If the books have any utility, if education has any purpose, it is to provoke and promote man's power to think, to know and to acquire the ways to obtain the rare jewels that are scattered in Gods great creation." Similarly, his views on female-education was both pertinent and contemporaneous - "It is said that woman happens to be the half of man. They mutually depend on each other, and

help each other in the paths of life. They together share the happiness and sorrows of the world, face trials and tribulations. In such cases if they fail to communicate their thoughts and emotions to each other, if one fails to absorb the thoughts of the other, if the half remains unworkable, then where would be the hope of happiness in that world ? How it would help in the general improvement of mankind." Separately, in one of the editorials of *Utkal Sahitya* (1925), discussing what constitutes a 'good writer' his views were very telling and relevant. It reads - ".....Literature is motivated towards business purposes. It is currently on, and will continue to be so. There is nothing improper about it. It is a necessity for the spread of education. But he who is a real writer, or wants to be one, should keep away from this business motivation as best as he can. If one has to cater to the motives and the desires of people, or to search ways for earning money by compromising one's own ideals, it would be a mean life for a writer, and instead it would be better to go for sweeping of roads to earn one's livelihood." As was said earlier, Biswanath Kar played a very important role during his time. It was both, as a very competent writer, and as a substantial promoter of excellence in literature.

Biswanath's model was taken up by many others, and in spite of Biswanath's lament in *Utkal Sahitya* that not many thoughtful people were coming out to provide essays for his journal, many did take to prose-writing, particularly essays. It was a rich harvest, almost till Independence, and by way of production it has hardly been surpassed even after Independence. All of them were junior contemporaries of Radhanath and Madhusudan, and wrote mostly in the first, second and third decades of the 20th century, spanning over to the fourth. We can distinguish them in two groups, first, all those who died before Independence and secondly, all others who died around the time of Independence or immediately after. The writers, in the first group were, as we have mentioned earlier, from Krushna Prasad Choudhury to Tarini

Charan Rath, and in the second group - Gopal Chandra Praharaj (1872-1945), Jalandhar Dev (1872-1952), Sashibhusan Roy (1879-1954), Jagabandhu Singh (1876-1948), Brajasundar Das (1880-1944), and Mohinimohan Senapati (1881-1945).

Krushna Prasad Choudhury was born at Kuanpal, in Cuttack district, about 25 kms from Cuttack. He was a teacher at Cuttack, converted to Brahmo religion in 1891, and was an active member of Utkal Brahmo Society. He was a close associate of Biswanath Kar and wrote extensively in *Utkal Sahitya.* His essays touched many contemporary issues, such as related to education, culture, religion, history, society as well as literature, and everywhere what was exhibited was a liberal, free mind given to attitudes of reform, self-reliance and reason. Some of his well-known essays were, entitled as, *Hindudharmar Punaruthan* (Resurgence of Hindu Religion), *Mahapuja O Streesiksha* (The Great Festival and Female Education), *Streejatir Swadhikar* (The Rights of Women), *Paribarik Dharmasadhana* (Religious Manners Inside a Family), *Jatiya Unnati* (National Development), *Atma Pariksha* (Self Analysis), *Odisar Itihas Churcha* (Discussion of Orissa's History), and related to literature, *Sahityara Sadhana* (Austerities in Literature) and *Samalochana* (Criticism) etc. Krushna Prasad's essays were sharp, pointed and pithy, and often provoked readers to think and react. They had dimensions far beyond his time and often reaches our times. Thus for example, his views on language- "If you want to keep literature alive, you have to first look into language. Literature cannot blossom without an adequate language. Unless literature is created in pure Oriya language, it cannot have necessary influence on people. Though intimately connected with Sanskrit and Prakrit, every provincial language has its own identity, otherwise it would not have been named differently. There are many local words that do not go back to Sanskrit or Prakrit. High-caste people in the society talk in either Sanskritized or Prakritized Oriya. To learn pure, colloquial Oriya language, one has to go to

low-caste people, particularly women. When illiterate poorly people come to towns from distant remote places, they see many new things, and they try to name them. It should be our endeavour to find out how they are named. It would not be enough to talk of literature sitting in towns only."

Shyamsundar Rajguru was born at Parlakhemundi in southern Orissa, an ex-State area, and served as a tutor to the princes of Parla's royal family. He was seriously involved in socio-political and socio-cultural activities, was the Chairman of Parla Municipality for about 15 years, the editor of *Ganjam News,* an English weekly, and promoted the causes of Oriya language, literature and the theatre. He distinguished himself as an essayist, and also as a literary historian - an almost pioneering work. His essays can be grouped in three sections, first, those that dealt with ancient Oriya poets, second, those that dealt with Oriya grammar and style of writing, and the third group, with Oriya language. His essays show his original thinking, comparative approach to whatever he wrote about, and a good insight into the nature of Oriya language and literary tradition. This is how he wrote about the *Mahabharat* of Sarala Das, an almost a pioneering exposition given about 100 years ago, when it had not been authentically edited, and neither was easily available.- "Sarala's *Mahabharat* is not as per Sanskrit original. It had many original items changed and newer imaginative items added.... Its language is simple and felicitous, description natural and without rhetoric and yet highly suggestive. In addition, wherever the poet has used his creative imagination easily and freely, the concerned accounts have become truly captivating."

Nilamoni Vidyaratna was born at Baideswar, in Banki area, towards south-west of Cuttack, and had his early education at Banki. Subsequently he served in different ex-State areas, such as Badamba, to the west of Cuttack; Bamanda, in the western Orissa; and Khallikote and Badakhemundi, in the Ganjam district, in the

southern Orissa. Everywhere he distinguished himself as an eminent social activist and a remarkable man of letters. Thus apart from running schools for children, night-schools for adults, and providing shelter-homes for widows and promoting widow-remarriage, he was also deeply involved in promoting the causes of Oriya language and literature and in the unification of Oriya-speaking tracts. He edited three journals, at different times, such as, *Sambalpur Hiteisini* (1889-1922), *Prajabandhu* (1903-1906) and *Ganjam Gunadarpan* (1907-1922) under royal patronage, at Badamba, Khallikote and Badakhemundi respectively, with extraordinary competence, and came to be established as a most remarkable editor at that time, at par with Gourisankar Roy, and Biswanath Kar. He frequently wrote in areas related to social situation, social reforms as well as on nationalistic needs of the Oriyas and on Oriya language. In *Sambalpur Hiteisini* he put up a strident voice in favour of Oriya against the dominance of Hindi in western Orissa, and in *Prajabandhu* and *Ganjam Gunadarpan* in favour of Oriya against the dominance of Telgu in southern Orissa. His lament about the indifference of the Oriyas, in general, about their own heritage, was intense and shows almost a strong contemporary ring. This is how he wrote in *Prativapuja* (Worshipping the Talent)- "People in our country are very reluctant in recognizing talents. In other civilized countries talented people always get support either from the Government treasury, or from institutions, or from people at large, to pursue their activities without obstruction... Though we Oriyas learn English at an elementary stage, and consider ourselves as highly educated, yet we lack many of the good qualities of people in civilized countries... Because such great poets as Upendra, Baladev, Dinakrushna, Jagannath etc. were born in this fallen country, therefore we are able to call ourselves a nation, and Oriya language a worth-while language. They brought glory to the nation and to the language. But did we show respect to them while they were alive, or even

today when they are no more... If talent gets recognized, innumerable talented people can surface. This enhances national pride, and spreads glory of the nation and the language elsewhere. We can reject it only at our own peril." Vidyaratna's writings were like a beacon-light to emerging Oriya-pride and Oriya-consciousness at the time.

Gopinath Nanda was born at Manjusha, an outlying Oriya tract (in Andhra Pradesh), in his maternal uncle's house, but was subsequently brought to Parlakhemundi, where he had his early education and where also he started his career, first as a school teacher in Oriya and Sanskrit, and then as a college Lecturer in Parla College. He was extremely well-versed in Sanskrit along with a number of other languages, including Hindi and Telgu, and was awarded royal honour for his great scholarship, by being felicitated by the then British Prince of Wales, in Madras, in 1920. He was an essayist, a critic, and a self-made linguist and lexicographer, apart from being a poet, translator and dramatist. All that brought to him immense reputation and respect from all over Orissa. This is how *Satyabadi,* the well-known journal of famous Satyabadi School of Gopabandhu Das, wrote about him in 1915- "By defining the nature of Oriya language, by successfully discussing the great epic *Mahabharat* by our first poet Sarala Das, and by engaging himself timelessly in other literary activities, he has shown such extraordinary competence, perseverance and merit, that probably none would object in calling him the first great votary in these areas of our ancient literature."

In fact, Gopinath's involvement with literature was almost complete. His Oriya language dictionary *(Sabdhabodha Avidhan)* based on contemporary usage, was the first of its type in Oriya, as also his discussions on the nature and structure of Oriya language *(Oriya Bhasatatwa),* and comparative critical estimates of Sarala's *Mahabharat (Sri Bharat Darpan)* and Jagannath's *Bhagabat* and Balaram's *Ramayana.* In spite of the effects of his immense Sanskrit

learning on his style of writing, Nanda's understanding and insight, both when he wrote on general topics as well on specific areas, were sharp and clear. This is how he wrote on 'Truth' -"The sun's tremendous heat, the all-consuming fiery rays of the noonday sun, the moon's nectar-like soothing touch, all recede before the glow of truth. The sharpness of factual reality, the consummableness, the smoothness, and the pleasantness pale before the glory of truth's heat. They all in course of time, or even occasionally, for one reason or the other, become frail and weak, but truth's strength never diminishes, it glows eternally." In a different context, writing on Sarala's *Mahabharat* his style becomes simpler, and tone becomes all comprehensive - "The language of Sarala's *Mahabharat* is everywhere simple and lucid. Whatever part one may observe it has the nature's natural beauty. At a time, when Oriya language was at an early stage of development, to acquire such an amount of lucidity, grace and richness, could be possible only by virtue of Sarala's own extraordinary intelligence and understanding. When this Indian language is compared with contemporary inscriptions and administrative formans, this immense refinement and enlargement could be possible, one believes, because of Sarala's magnificent imagination and creative power." Biswanath Kar spoke of Gopinath's "immense patience, perseverance, spirit of enquiry and insight". It was just, what this quiet, soft-spoken man initiated in his own quiet way about 100 years ago, even now remains as a surprise to scholars and researchers.

Mrutunjay Rath was born in a small village on the river Bhargavi, in Puri district, and grew up in very adverse situations. But his intelligence, perseverance, and strong determination saw him through, and in a span of 42 years of life he could earn reputation as a leading man of letters and was awarded the honorific title 'Vanibhusan' by the elite of Cuttack in 1904. Rath tried his hand in many branches of literature, but it was mostly in nonfiction

prose, that is, essay, biography and critical discussions related to language that he excelled. People like Madhusudan Rao, Biswanath Kar and Brajasundar Das were among his good friends, and in fact, he was associated with Kar in editing *Utkal Sahitya,* and wrote extensively in *Mukura* edited by Brajasundar Das. Besides, he himself was a superb teacher of literature and language, and many of his writings responded to a crying need of the time, that is, to what extent educational dimension can be added to contemporary Oriya literature, so as to increase its viability and substantiality.

Prabandha Patha, published posthumously in 1927, contained a number of Rath's essays that ranged from biographical and science-related topics to such areas as related to man's character, habit and mental make-up. Thus in the essay *Avyasa* (Habit) he writes- "It is said in the scriptures that man's mind is extremely restless. As it is almost impossible to resist the force of a powerful, fierce wind, so is the case with the mind. But it can be controlled slowly through habit. The habit shows the difference between the senses of happiness and sorrow. What appears pleasant to somebody may not be so to the other... Habit provides man with immense strength. Even without giving many examples, it would be enough to point out that habit has given us our power to speak. We all know how a child's babel slowly forms into half-formed words, and finally blooms into complete words and meaning." Or, this is how he writes on happiness - "Many think that to be happy and to be satisfied are the same thing. They are not. There is a subtle difference between the two. When man gets what he searches for he feels satisfied. That is, it is something which is imposed, it depends on an outside factor. But happiness is not that. Not to look for more, or hope for more is an attitude which is happiness...." Besides, Mrutunjay also wrote perceptively on primary education as well as on various aspects of language, particularly Oriya language. Such essays were, for example, *Chatasali* and

Chatuspathi on primary education, where his emphasis was on the competence and character of teachers; and *Sabdartha Churcha* (Meaning of Words), *Dhwnyatmaka Bhasa* (Phonetic Language), *Bhasa Rahasya* (Mystery of Language), *Gramya Bhasa* (Colloquial Language), *Odia Bhasar Mula* (The Roots of Oriya), *Odia Bhasar Bartaman Abastha O Gati* (The Present Condition and Trends of Oriya Language) etc. on aspects of language.

Besides, he showed equal competence in few other genres too, such as biography, literary criticism and travel-literature. His two biographies on two of his eminent contemporaries, Gourisankar Roy and Madhusudan Rao, respectively entitled, *Karmajogi Gourisankar* and *Brahmajna Madhusudan* were early examples in that genre, and were fine specimens of biographical literature, where activities of individual-lives were analysed in the context of socio-cultural changes. His other well-known work *Sarala Charita* (1911) was part biography and part literary discussion, a pioneering work on the 15th century Oriya epic poet and his great work *Mahabharat,* a work which preceded Gopinath Nanda's important work *Bharat Darpan* and was almost like a beacon light to it. Mrutunjay's interest was far ranging. Apart from Sarala Das, he wrote extensively on other important ancient and medieval Oriya writers, such as, Balaram Das, Achyutananda Das, Dinakrushna Das, Upendra Bhanja and Avimanyu Samantsinhar etc. and everywhere he made keen analysis of socio-cultural conditions along with a perceptive understanding of the writer's own craft. Additionally, under the heading 'Tippani' (Notes) he wrote almost regularly in *Mukura* on various places of Orissa that he visited - early examples of fine tourist writing that combined a historian's curiosity with the creative sensitivity of a poet. These places were many, such as Mahavinayak, Lalitgiri, Udaygiri, Dhauli, Daspalla etc. This is how he writes on Nilamadhab at Kantilo - "Looking at it from the village, the cloud-kissing compound walls of the temple give the illusion of a five-storied

palace. The picturesque situation of Nilamadhab pleases the mind and the eyes exceedingly. On one side the blue flow of the Mahanadi and its vast sand beds, and on the other, the blue-wooded hills. As the temple appears wonderfully beautiful from a distance, so also the vast carpeted surrounding below appears equally pleasing." Mrutunjay died at an early age of 42. He lived almost continuously in adversity. Yet a mind so given to work, and so detached and involved at the same time, and a soul so dedicated to the enrichment of Oriya literature, is hardly to come by.

Tarini Charan Rath was born at Berhampur town, and after necessary education in Madras city joined Madras Judicial Service and worked as a District Munsif. His last posting was at Aska, in Ganjam district, where he was suddenly attacked by cerebral malaria and died untimely at the age of 39. He wrote both in English and Oriya and mostly concentrated in three areas, that is, (i) topics related to science - almost pioneering work in Oriya, (ii) on ancient and medieval writers which he organized in his *Utkal Sahityar Itihas* (History of Oriya Literature), and (iii) historical writings, particularly related to southern Orissa in such essays as *Ghumsar Itihasara Ketoti Prustha* (Some Pages from the History of Ghumsar), *Ganjanagar*, *Buddhakhol*, *Asika* etc., as well as an extensive article entitled *Southern Oriya States* where he discussed in detail about a number of southern Oriya- speaking tracts outside Orissa, such as Sri Kurma, Mukhalinga, Simachal, Rajmahendri, Ellor, Koudabidu, Kalapalli etc. All Tarini Charan's writings, whether on science, literature, history or archaeology, were written with a good deal of felicity of language, and with clarity and understanding. Tarini Charan's untimely demise, like that of Mrutyunjay Rath's, was both unfortunate and regrettable.

Gopal Chandra Praharaj, essayist, belletrist, poet, critic, collector of folk songs and folk sayings, and a considerable lexicographer, was born in the village Sidheswarpur in the Cuttack district. He was the second of the 17 children of his father, being

the eldest son, and had a childhood in a reasonable affluent conditions. His father wanted him to be an engineer (he had a stint in Sibpur Engineering College, near Calcutta) but he finally turned out to be a lawyer and picked up a successful practice in Cuttack. Praharaj began his literary career with poetry, and wrote some excellent pieces for children. He was also keenly interested in collecting Oriya folk tales and Oriya proverbs and riddles. Those were variously published in the years 1901, 1920, 1926 and 1927. All that constituted a singularly pioneering work for him. So also his work on Oriya lexicography, which he published in 7 volumes, entitled *Bhasakosa* (Encyclopedia of Words) between 1931 and 1940, and contained about 1,85,000 words in about 9500 pages - massive and amazing. But Praharaj's real strength lay in his belles-lettres that he wrote from 1901 onwards, mostly in *Utkal Sahitya,* which established him as a remarkable essayist of his time. These pieces were subsequently collected in a number of volumes, relatively more important ones being, *Bhagabat Tungire Sandhya* (Evenings in the Village Club, 1903), *Bai Mahanti Panji* (The Almanac of Bai Mahanti, 1913), *Duniar Halchal* (The Affairs of the World, 1915), and *Ama Gharar Halchal* (The Affairs of our Home, 1921) etc., They had two virtues. First, they gave a fine exposure of the contemporary social conditions, almost always with humour and a mild satire. Secondly, they were written in a conversational, colloquial language which conveyed both power and suppleness, almost reminiscent of Phakirmohan's use of language. Thus this is how he writes about the contemporary judiciary process.- "All laws and law courts are meant for rich people. Whoever scatters money, is sure to win. He who does not have strength in his waist, dies.", or about the contemporary education - "The primary education department in Orissa today is full of Satanic delusions and ghostly skeletons. The temples of the gods of education department are first to be cleansed. Instead of doing that, if the Government decides to spread awnings and

waste money, it would never be able to protect the food-offerings from blind bats." An interesting reference to the rights of female has a sharp feministic tinge - "In Hindu scriptures, all powers, whether of wealth, education or even of war, emanate from women. One wonders in a country where in religion, mythology and history women posses the highest place and position, and provide the greatest ideals and beauty, how come, in the same country their position today is so low ? Why in the same country we are so reluctant to push them towards progress and improvement ? Why the women are so tortured, so without rights, so dependant ?"

Jalandhar Dev was born in the royal family of Bamanda, a family that was deeply interested in literature and included, besides Jalandhar Dev, such other eminent persons as the king Sir Basudev Sudhal Dev himself, and his sons Sachidananda Tribhuban Dev and Balabhadra Dev. He worked in various administrative jobs in the State, such as Dewan and as the First Class Magistrate, and for a period of more than two years (1949-1951) became a Member of the Orissa Legislative Assembly. His interest in literature was a continuing interest, that continued from about 1890 till his death, during which he wrote stories, dramas, travelogues and essays, and edited a number of journals. But it was in essay that he achieved eminence and earned great respect from all concerned.

Jalandhar Dev's essays show a strong logical, scientific and analytical habit of mind, free of superstitions and conservatism, and inclined towards upholding the fundamental values of Indian civilization and culture. His essays have many dimensions, and they range from caste and society, language and literature, to religious faith, and to such areas as the Vedas, the Mahabharat and the Ramayana, even to astrology and agriculture. Some important titles include *Veda O Hindudharma* (The Vedas and the Hindu Religion), *Mahabharat* (The Mahabharat), *Ramayana* (The Ramayana), *Bibaha Bichar* (A Consideration of Marriage), *Barna O Jati* (Race and Caste), *Swadhin Chinta* (Independent Thoughts),

Nara O Nari (Men and Women), *Sahitya O Jati* (Literature and Caste), and *Katakara Sahitya Churcha* (Literary Discussions at Cuttack) etc.

Dev's analytical mind and free independent spirit can be seen from the following two extracts. The first is from *Veda O Hindudharma*, which is a sharp insightful comment on Indian character - "We cannot imagine why the Indians are so eager to curtail man's abilities. The Indian is intolerant of the glory, position and power of his own nation. Therefore the Indians have no national hero, no national poet, no national prophet and no national history and no national literature. The nation that does not have these, is not entitled to be called a nation. A nation lacking these also lacks humanity. The nation that looks only to God for help, only moans and begs for charity whenever calamity comes, that nation has no masculinity, no self-prestige. The Indians have always gone under their own superstitions. Even then they are not willing to forsake it. What can be more lamentable than that ?" Secondly, in *Sahitya O Jati*, he laments our continued negligence of women which he maintains, not only impairs the nation's growth, but also the growth of literature - "It is no exaggeration to say that lack of true education in the country is the real impediment in the development of literature. So also is the absence of education for women. The prime necessity is to hold up women in a higher position in the society. But female education is a dream in a society, where women are ignored, scandalized, tossed about like a low thing. She is not a friend, a co-worker, a partner in everything, but only a servant, a slave - this idea has to be banished from the society and from the mind of the nation".

Sashibhusan Roy, son of Radhanath Roy, was like his father, an indefatigable traveller of places and a keen lover of nature, but unlike him he gave his best attention to prose, and wrote innumerable pieces - descriptive, reflective as well as narrative. His books include *Dakhinatya Bhramana* (Travels in the Deccan,

1896), *Pitrusmruti* (In Memory of My Father, 1912), *Utkalar Rutuchitra* (A Portrait of Seasons in Orissa, 1913), and *Utkal Prakruti* (Orissa's Nature, 1914) as well as other types of books, such as *Palli* (Village), *Sri Ramachandra Dev, Vivekananda Smruti, Adhunik Talcher* (Modern Talcher, 1940), *Chetan Chinta* (Conscious Thought, 1937) and *Prabandha Prabaha* (The Stream of Essays, 1944) etc. In addition, under the title *Bikhipta Chinta* (Scattered Thoughts) he regularly wrote in *Utkal Sahitya* on a variety of topics, such as, on society, civilization, culture, character, devotion to work and humanliness etc. In short, Sashibhusan's essays have a very large range. Beginning from external nature where he excelled in providing great depth and perception, to human nature, rural life, education, language, literature, philosophy and society and everywhere he left a mark of deep thinking and understanding - a spread of ideas from a sophisticated, elitist level to day to day happenings in a lighter vein. At the same time his style had a good deal of clarity and discipline, and often always throbbed with deep poetic emotion. A few extracts showing Sashibhusan's perception of nature, and understanding of life and literature would be to the point. The first is an account of the autumn season- "The autumn, which is pleasant to the eyes, full of beauty and full of grace, has now like a young bride stepped into the world. Its delicate, sweet touch, milk-white reeds, curd-like Saptaparni, butter like moon, and white wheel like moonbeams get together in the sea of beauty. When the fields are full of green crops, when because of incessant rains all ponds are full of flowers, when the whiteness of flowering reeds show the advancing age of the rains, when the farmers after months of labour look wistfully towards their harvest, that is the indication of a peaceful autumn." The second extract shows the writer's, anxiety and thoughts about Oriya literature and language - "Now the question is which language or literature of Orissa has to be accepted as model. Any consideration of community or communal issue is irrelevant at

this point. It is painful to observe that such a consideration generally demeans and debases the glory and greatness of the nation. The remedy to this pain is to fix up a permanent and fixed model of literature and language which is otherwise called standard. In order to promote Oriya literature to a level of real literature it is necessary to move beyond the conflicts, animosities and bitterness among the Oriyas to organize this literature as the real unity of strength of the Oriya nation."

Jagabandhu Singh was born in the village Bhubanpur near Nimapara, on the way to Konark, in the Puri district. He was a freedom-fighter, a social activist, and twice became the Member of Bihar-Orissa Legislative Assembly. Professionally a lawyer at Puri, he earned reputation as a writer, and wrote frequently in contemporary journals, such as, *Utkal Sahitya, Mukura* and *Satyabadi* etc.. They were informative, pithy and analytical essays written from 1910 onwards, and topics ranged from ancient Orissa, Oriya literature, Sanskrit literature, education particularly female education, mythology, industry, commerce to astrology, music and national life, as well as on need to work, religious faith, family ideals, and on unknown, but important localities of Orissa. Everywhere Singh had his own point of view, and a keen insight into problems along with a clarity of mind and a clarity of stylistic arrangements. A most important aspect of his extensive writing lies in his continues throwback to ancient Orissa, and particularly to the strength, cohesiveness and glory of Orissa's national life - an almost unparalleled motivation among the writers of the time. His books include *Prachin Utkal* (Ancient Orissa, 1929), *Prabandhasara* (Essential Essays, 1929), *Gruhalaxmi* (The Goddess of Family), *Sri Krushna* and *Gita* etc. This is how he argues about the relevance of ancient Oriya literature - "If any particular flower in the arbour of ancient Oriya literature is ugly, would we reject the entire arbour, or should we pick out those flowers that we do not like and replace them by better flowers. In

my view we should do the latter thing. But when we discuss the ancient literature, we should also consider the concerned time and place. When we discuss any particular work, it is necessary that we should know the time and place of the writer. How was the poet's environment ?- is an essential consideration. When a comparison is made ancient Oriya literature does not show anything which is unpalatable.... The production of literature depends on the stream of contemporary ideas. Whenever in any country whatever emotional and mental climate emerges, literature takes from that. That is a natural situation. Whatever is unpalatable today was not so always. No doubt the ideas belonged to a past, but we have to see the structure of literature. How far the language was improved, how far the ideas were expressed, are what we have to consider. How far the poets were competent to describe a scene or a situation, is also to be seen. It is not correct to discard the ancient literature, by only saying that it was erotic. The competence and artistry which the poets have shown in the ancient Oriya literature is something to feel proud of. If you want to focus on national glory, literature is the nation's richest property".

Brajasundar Das was born in Jajpur district (Village Kantabania Harekrushnapur), but subsequently settled at Cuttack, after completing his education in Cuttack and Calcutta, and earned great reputation as a leader of the movement for unification of Oriya-speaking tracts, and as a remarkable promoter of Oriya language and literature. He founded *Mukura,* a famous literary journal of the time, and edited it for 25 years, till 1930. *Mukura* functioned almost at par with *Utkal Sahitya* and became an extremely important centre for new ideas and literature. Brajasundar wrote in *Mukura* continuously, both editorial pieces as well as short, forceful discourses on varieties of topics - social-cultural, literary, as well as political (He was at different times members of Imperial Council, Bihar-Orissa Legislative Council and Orissa Legislative Assembly) and gave strong support

to writings in the areas of literature, history, philosophy and social reforms and particularly, ancientness of Hindu religion and Orissa's national life. Though short, usually brief, yet Brajasundar's prose writings were sharply intelligent and analytical, and provided specific points of view and direction in many matters.

Mohinimohan Senapati, son of Phakirmohan Senapati, was trained in philosophy and served as a Professor of Philosophy in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. His early essays were written and published in *Utkal Sahitya* around 1904, and earned him reputation as an iconoclastic thinker. A formative influence on his writing was from Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), German philosopher, on whom he wrote extensively in an essay entitled *Nitsenka Darsanika Mata* (The Philosophical Views of Nietzsche). Besides, he wrote a number of hard-hitting essays opposed to contemporary conventional ideas related to faith and religion, fate and destiny, marriage and position of women, as well as on distress and motivations of modern consciousness and modern mind. His writings were argumentative and analytical, and everywhere showed a free ranging independent mind. Some of the titles of his essays were *Bibaha* (Marriage), *Bharatare Bibaha Sanskar* (Reforms in Marriage in India), *Bartaman Jugara Akankhya O Udhesya* (The Desires and Motivations of Modern Age), *Uropia Mahasamarar Nitibigyan* (The Ethics of European Great Wars), *Brahmasamaj* (The Brahmo Society) and *Odia Kahani* (Oriya Tales) that were subsequently collected together in a book entitled *Bibidha Prasanga* (Miscellaneous Topics, 1939). An extract, on his disapproval of the bond of marriage - "There is no need of keeping men and women bound together through marriages, against their wishes. This is a superstition and extreme social torture. We hope in future this insurmountable bond would be broken, and men and women would get their sexual freedom. To get complete sexual freedom we have to adopt the politics of maternal societies."

he pan-Indian nationalist movement that grew up in the part of the 19th century, and took a shape in the formation of dian National Congress, became bold and aggressive at the turn f the century, and got a big impetus from the agitations connected with the Government's decision to partition Bengal, in the first decade. This influenced Orissa and Orissa's thinking public. A direct offshoot was the foundation of the Central Young Utkal Association in 1904, in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, under inspiration from Biswanath Kar. Two alert youngsters, Gopabandhu Das and Brajasundar Das organized the Association, which was split into a number of sections related to literary activities, social activities, moral improvements, economic investigations etc. Gopabandhu remained as the permanent General Secretary, and other youngsters such as, Nilakantha Das, Harihar Das, Godabaris Mishra and Krupasindhu Mishra, functioned as the Secretaries of different sections. The Association being the first of its type, and being a unique and innovative one, spread strong socio-political awareness, and attracted a large number of students and youngsters to its public meetings with like-minded, chosen young people, the purpose being to further aggressive nationalism and to unseat the foreign dominion.

Along with this growth of general nationalistic sentiments, at a different level, Orissa had her own problems. This was to unite Oriya-speaking tracts and to have a separate province. For this the leadership was given by Madhusudan Das, through Utkal Sammilani, which was formed in 1903, and subsequently put forth claims for a separate province, that was effected in 1936. Thus when the Satyabadi School (a rural residential school) was started in 1909, through the efforts of Gopabandhu Das at Satyabadi, near Puri, it combined the prevailing spirit of nationalism with a strong desire for a separate province of Orissa for all Oriya-speaking people, along with tendencies for social reform, and for a new,

nationalistic education and literature. Gopabandhu's leadership was a very inspiring and effective one, and he was assisted by a host of dedicated people, chief among whom were Nilakantha Das (1884-1967), Godabaris Mishra (1886-1956) and Krupasindhu Mishra (1887-1926), The school flourished for about 12 years, till 1921, during which it not only trained a large number of students mentally, morally and physically but also had a great influence on contemporary social, political and literary atmosphere. It was variously praised by Madhusudan Das in 1913, and by Gandhiji in 1921 ("I spent a day of great happiness among the teachers and students of the school. This is a serious experiment to teach and train under the open sky... If such dedicated workers, teachers and students can emerge in this country, it would not be surprising to attain Swarajya in a year's time"). The school almost became like a powerful movement in socio-political field as well as in literature, and the chief exponents, that is, Gopabandhu, Nilakantha, Gadabaris and Krupasindhu particularly, emerged as very competent writers. Their combined creative work - a substantial body of literature done mainly between 1909 and 1925, added significantly to post-Radhanath literature, and they themselves came to be popularly known as 'Satyabadi Writers'. Their work had different dimensions. For example. first of all, it expressed sentiments against the contemporary British administration in which the voice of Gopabandhu was most strident, secondly, the desire for Oriya nationalism and the need for uniting Oriya-speaking tracts, in which the voice of Godabaris was most eloquent, thirdly, it was a reminder to the people of Orissa of their glorious heritage, and of the courage and exploits of their past heroes, in which Nilakantha and Krupasindhu excelled.

Gopabandhu Das was born in the village Suando, in the Puri district, and was trained as a lawyer, and had stints of pleadership at Puri, Cuttack and in the ex-State of Mayurbhanj. He was a member of Bihar-Orissa Legislative Council from 1917

to 1920, after which he participated and took leadership of Congress Movement in Orissa till his death. Apart from being a great freedom-fighter and political leader, he was also a remarkable social activist and social organizer, and started Orissa's most famous daily, *The Samaj*, in 1919 (a weekly from 1919 to 1930, and subsequently a daily) and also founded and edited a monthly *Satyabadi* (1915-1920). Gopabandhu wrote extensively both in *Satyabadi* and *The Samaj* in matters related to contemporary social, political and literary situations. His prose was crisp, pointed and with a definite point of view, and almost always written in a conversational, colloquial style. But his poetry had a different frame - personal, emotional, motivated by religion and strong nationalistic feelings, and romantically inclined towards nature, as well as to the plight of common people. Most of Gopabandhu's well-known poems were written during his spells of imprisonment, particularly during the years 1923 and 1924. But his career as a poet had began much earlier, almost from the turn of the century and his first published book, published in the first decade, was *Abakasa Chinta* (Thoughts in Leisure). It contained 38 poetical pieces, written at different times, on a variety of topics, ranging from past personalities and places of Orissa to contemporary situations, always in a reflective-meditative mood, in a spirit of both joy and melancholy, but largely melancholy. Thus this is how he reacts when he sees Barabati, the famous ruined-fort at Cuttack, the ikon of Orissa's past glory, now lost, on the first day of the 20th century. First, despair, a complete helplessness at what time has done.

> Oh, Time ! You swallow all
> Beauty, richness everything
> Under your invincible order the great Utkal is no more
> It is drowned in misery.

But slowly consolation comes and new hope for the future,

> Please give new strength to Utkal's sons

New juicy-fruits to Utkal's trees

New holy water in Utkal's ponds

And new divine-flowers in Utkal's gardens.

A well-known poem from the same collection entitled *Rela Upare Chilika Darsana* (On Seeing Chilika from the Train) also carries similar sentiments - mixed nationalistic feelings with personal feelings of unhappiness at the loss of the ancient glory of the land, and ends with a rhetorical exhortation :

Where are the ancient ships of Orissa ?

Where are those virile songs of sailors ?...

The same mountains and forests remain as ever

The sea-beaches strewn with rocks remain the same

But alas ! Where is that old heroism,

The old national glory of Orissa ?

Even a poem with a different mood, entitled *Chhabis Barsa Prabesh* (On Arriving at 26), that refers to time's force and passage of time ("Invisibly, silently, alas with what a force/ Flows the time's river so impartially") also records an intense melancholic awareness and an acute sense of futility.:

Twenty-five years are over

Ah, how it pains me when I look back

My past a dry sandy beach

Nowhere even a blade of green grass.

Gopabandhu's other important poetry books were, *Bandira Atmakatha* (The Autobiography of a Prisoner) and *Karakabita* (Poems from the Prison), published in 1923 and 1928 respectively. Gopabandhu was imprisoned from June, 1922 to June, 1924 in connection with the Non-Cooperation Movement and was initially kept in Cuttack Jail from where he was shifted to Hazaribagh Jail in Bihar. *Bandira Atmakatha* which is a long, semi-autobiographical poem in 6 sections and 782 lines, refers to the poet's stay in the Cuttack Jail, and his subsequent act of shifting by train, from Cuttack across Orissa to the north. It is both an

account and a testament - account of a highly distressing socio-political environment through recollection, and declaration of the poet's faith and conviction, that first of all, he should be one with people - "Let my body mix with the earth of this country/ Let all people walk on my back/ Let all the holes on way to Swaraj/ Be filled with my blood, flesh and bone..." , and secondly, whatever may happen the end should be complete Independence - "Make my heart strong/ Oh my Lord - Lord of Truth/ Let my whole attention be on achieving Swarajya/ Bharat's Swarajya is a blessing to the world." The second book *Karakabita* that contains 13 poems, also at one level continues the mood of *Bandira Atmakatha,* the mood of resentment and anger, with socio-political motivations related directly to prison-life. At least 5 poems, a substantial portion of the book, with titles such as, *Bandira Swadesh Chinta* (The Patriotic Thoughts of a Prisoner), *Bandir Sandhya Bhakti* (The Evening Prayers of a Prisoner), and *Bandira Sandhya Bhavana* (The Evening Thoughts of a Prisoner) etc., deal with that, whereas others generally deal with personal emotions of love, anxiety and a dissatisfaction with the working of destiny. Particularly the poem *Bandira Swadesh Chinta,* a long poem in 131 stanzas, is the poet's one of the most famous and popular poems. It is an address to the south wind that comes across Orissa to the prisoner's cell in the Hazaribag prison in the north, and along with graphic accounts of various places of Orissa in fond recollection, it mingles autobiographical elements with intense homesick thoughts of the prisoner. Both *Bandira Atmakatha* and *Karakabita* were extremely important creative documents in modern Oriya literature and were powerful expressions of strong nationalistic sentiments in the turbulent twenties.

As has been pointed out earlier, Gopabandhu wrote extensively in prose, mostly in *Satyabadi* and in *The Samaj* as editorials, and also as separate features. It was highly purposive, and established a direct rapport between him and the readers, and

was very much effective in moulding public opinion in a number of contemporary situations. Thus, this is how he speaks of the true nature of independence - "If one leaves his school or office, what would he do, many people ask. This is a wrong understanding. The country's 30 crore people do not earn their livelihood through clerkship or pleadership. We cannot tolerate to be one with them. Our education provides no other purpose except to be a clerk. This is the effect of slavery, the infatuation of sub-ordination. What we consider national education will open up once we leave our schools and colleges. This may be difficult to understand, but it is so. Once that happens, educated people will learn how to cultivate land, how to carry postage, how to clean the toilets. They will never think any work demeaning. Independence is a component of the mind. Once that emerges, the question 'what to do' will never arise. This spirit of independence is in one's own mind, you don't require weapons to get it, neither there is any need of scandalizing others. Once it rises there is no mundane power on earth that can stop it." (1922). Or elsewhere, talking of people's power he says - "It should be clearly understood that people constitute the trunk of the nation. In the West people's power has extinguished all other powers. The roots though remain hidden in the soil, take the life force from the earth and keep the tree fresh and living. The nation's tree functions likewise. Those who are at the top keep the nation's tree fresh with the light of thought, but unless it is replenished from below it will die - unless there are roots and the base, the branches and leaves will die... To maintain the nation's independence it is necessary to keep its base in tact. No doubt it is inside the earth, but it is the real strength. That is the foundation of the national temple. We should be careful that the roots do not get eaten by insects or do not get rotten." (1919). Gopabandhu's prose has been collected in 8 volumes - a remarkable document of alertness and purposiveness.

Nilakantha Das was a close associate of Gopabandhu and

after completing his education in Calcutta University (wherefrom he obtained his M.A. in 1911) he acted as the Headmaster of Gopabandhu's famous residential school at Satyabadi. Like him too, he was a keen social activist, a social reformer and actively participated at the top level in contemporary politics, and also edited a journal of his own, entitled *Nababharat,* in the thirties. He was born in a village not far from Gopabandhu's village, named Sri Ramachandrapur, in the same Puri district, and had settled at Cuttack till his death. He wrote extensively both in prose and poetry and got himself established as a fine essayist, critic, linguist, literary historian, educationist and poet. His books include, in poetry, *Konarke* (At Konark, 1919), *Kharavela* (Kharavela, 1920), *Pranayini,* (translation of Tennyson's *Princess,* 1919) and *Dasa Nayak* (translation of Tennyson's *Enoch Arden,* 1923) etc., and in prose *Odia Sahityar Kramaparinam* (The Evolution of Oriya Literature, 1948, 1953), *Odia Bhasa O Sahitya* (Oriya Language and Literature, 1954, 1958), *Arya Jiban* (The Aryan Way of Life), and an autobiography *Atmajibani* (1959).

Konarke is Nilakantha's most famous and most important creative work. It has two parts, one, a sequence of short poems, 40 in all, and a total of 960 lines, entitled *Ramachandire Rati O Sakala* (The Night and Morning at Ramachandi), Ramachandi being the place of the Goddess Ramachandi, very close to Konark, and the other a long, narrative poem, a Kavya, entitled *Mayadevi* (Maya Devi). Both the parts relate to the famous sun-temple at Konark. The first part records the poet's experiences and feelings in a stormy full-moon night, and the subsequent clear morning at Konark, where the poet had led, as a teacher, a group of young boys from the Satyabdi School, for excursion. The feelings range from a sympathetic sorrow for the boys who had lost the comforts and pleasures at home, the occasion being a day of a family festival called 'Kumar Purnima', to glorious, nationalistic thoughts about Orissa's past, the tone being a mixture of rhetorical exultation with

melancholic sorrow, and the vision was of a happy, bright land in spite of fierce storms and darkness. The second part is an account of a tragic love-story, a fictional account, between Narasimha Dev, the young prince of Orissa, and Maya Devi, the young beautiful daughter of a banished chieftain, and narrates how the death of Maya Devi prompted Narasimha Dev after he became the King of Orissa, (1238-1264 A.D) to build the sun-temple at Konark in her memory. A fine, eloquent passage from *Mayadevi*, which can be considered as a good representative passage of the nationalistic sentiments of the Satyabadi writers, that shows immense joy taken by the speaker on Orissa's glorious heritage and beauty, runs as follows :

> I can imagine how is Jambu Desa
> But the land of Utkal is my own experience.
> How can I describe it Oh, Prince,
> Wherefrom can I get that rich language ?
> How can I say, how bright the sun smiles in green forests ?
> How does the sea and the sea-beaches
> mingle in the sky in the distant horizon ?
> How in the rising waves and in the vibration of stars
> wind blows sweetly from the distant islands ?
> And how it dances over the green crops,
> and blows from mountain to mountain ?
> And how in the gray blueness like dark clouds,
> the mountains stand in the still horizon,
> And how in the golden rays of the morning
> the sea-beach laughs with golden waves.

Elsewhere from the same *Mayadevi* the chieftain mourns how he is treated as an outcast in his own land - a fine patriotic declaration, "I am defeated/I have noting else to say /The son of the soil is a thief here./But the foreign thieves/Who suck peoples' wealth/Show as great heroes in the world./Oh, my destiny/What has happened now ? / My voice fails to speak of my home/These blue forests/

These green fields/Those villages all destroyed./In starvation dies the farmer/Who knows his agony and pain. / And the king's men/ The swindlers and thieves/Wander in villages, forests and fields."

Konarke was written in a racy, idiomatic language, almost a departure from Radhanath-Madhusudan tradition, in an expansive tone of joy, pride as well as melancholy, and remains a landmark in Oriya poetry.

Nilakantha also excelled in prose. It had balance, precision, and was written with a free flow and invariably with fresh and original point of view put forth with a keen conviction. Motivation varied - from essays on linguistics and literary criticism to discussions on social and educational reforms and cultural reconstruction. Thus *Arya Jiban* deals with ancient manners and beliefs and the benefits they provide to present-day life. Similarly *Odia Sahityar Kramaparinam* is an extensive discussion on the evolution of Orissa's culture vis-a-vis the identity of Oriya personality from about the 13th through the 18th century. These books, as well as other essays, show Nilakantha's sharp intelligence, keen analytical power and deep understanding. These qualities are seen at their best in the book *Odia Bhasa O Sahitya,* that contains essays on Oriya language and on major Oriya authors, written in a period between 1917 and 1955 - a book almost at par in importance with *Konarke.* It has 18 essays, eight on Oriya grammar and language, eight on such authors as Sarala Das, Upendra Bhanja, Phakirmohan Senapati, Radhanath Roy, Madhusudan Rao and Nandakishor Bal, and two essays on the nature and form of poetry. The essays on language and grammar were pioneering essays - descriptive accounts of Oriya grammar and language at a time when such methodology was almost unknown anywhere else. But his critical essays on Oriya authors were the best of his prose writing. They show his keen insight, sharp intelligence and acute perception which have been rarely matched in Oriya literature so far. They not only highlight the

essential strength of the authors they discuss, but also at the sametime provide a frame of development of Oriya literature from Sarala (15th century) till his own time (Nandakishor) and invariably from a perspective of Oriya identity in modern times.

Thus this is how he writes of Sarala Das - "The society's progress and development depend on revolt and revolution. Depending on how powerful is the revolution, and how far its welfare measures affect the society, the revolutionary becomes a great man to that effect. The great visionary Sidheswar (Sarala) was a revolutionary of that type who ushered in a new age. At the sametime he was a real man of the soil - a raw, fine Oriya... To protect the society, literature and culture, and to establish their livingness, Sarala's was the Oriya's first most aggressive and most successful revolution." And this is about Upendra Bhanja and his Kavya *Labanyabati*- "In *Labanyabati* or in his other Kavyas, whatever Upendra Bhanja speaks about home, family, fathers and sons, family-life, the servants, the friendship, even humorous talks and conversations that may be good, bad or indifferent in the yard-stick of an individual, they are basically ours own. That is why his writings are so popular. They empower our hearts so much because essentially what they give us are our own language, our hopes, our habits and nature, our actions and reactions, our love, our gestures, our conversation and our relationship and intimacy." Similar sentiments can also be noted in connection with Phakirmohan - "In general the graceful gesture of humour and the natural appeal of language have made Phakirmohan what he is... Whenever emotion is inspired, language emerges automatically. Similarly Phakirmohan's intimate association with Oriya life, manners and mental conditions is automatically expressed in his language... There are writers who think that quality literature is not possible in people's language. Phakirmohan's writing remains as a bold protest to that forever. The naturalness of his language has exhibited a new power of our language, and

has opened a new age in literature."

Godabaris Mishra was born at Banapur, near Chilika lake. He completed his M.A from Calcutta University, and subsequently joined Satyabadi School as a teacher. He was a close associate of Gopabandhu and Nilakantha, and like them he was a keen social activist, a remarkable writer, an educationist and a top Congress leader. He was Orissa's Minister of Education and Finance in the in War Ministry in 1941 and 1942 (during which time he was credited to have launched Utkal University) and a Member of Orissa Legislative Assembly after Independence. He was a versatile writer, and wrote in many forms. His writings include poetry collections such as *Kalika* (The Buds, 1921), *Kisalaya* (The Leaves, 1922), and *Alekhika* (Portraits, 1923) etc., dramas such as *Purusottam Dev* (1917) and *Mukunda Dev* (1920), an autobiography, *Ardha Satabdhira Odisa O Tahinre Mo Sthana* (Half-Century Orissa and My Place therein, 1958), as well as a number of short stories, essays and adaptations from foreign classics.

The nationalist strain that we found as a major strain in Gopabandhu and Nilakantha, also continues to be the same in Godabaris - a deep concern for Orissa's past, present and future, a continuous anxiety how Oriya-speaking tracts should be united and a strong resentment at the lack of independence and freedom for the country. In addition, a sensitiveness to nature, sympathy for the deprived and neglected, and a general humanitarian sense also pervaded his writing, at par with the other two. He is particularly credited for ballads, contained in his book *Alekhika*, which not only introduced this form in Oriya poetry, but also made it very popular. The ballads were based on events and personalities taken from Orissa's history and legends, and communicated deep emotions of joy, elation and melancholy in a simple and extremely musical language. Similarly his autobiography *Ardha Satabdhira Odisa O Tahinre Mo Sthana* was a remarkable account of Orissa

in the first part of the 20th century, a unique personal document done with a fine sense of precision, humour and detachment - an autobiography that compares creditably with Phakirmohan's autobiography *Mo Atmajiban Charita.*

Kalijai a ballad from *Alekhika,* is one of the most popular poems of the poet. It is a story poem, about how a young girl named Jai, while going to her husband's house across Chilika in a boat with her father, got drowned as the boat capsized in a storm, subsequently in popular belief became the Goddess 'Kalijai', whose temple now stands in the middle of Chilika and who, it is said, looks after the safety of the wayfarers across the lake. The poem succeeds in transforming the sense of pathos arising out of the drowning of a young bride, into a sense of beauty - beauty of nature and atmosphere. In a different mood the poet writes of the miserable condition of Orissa, particularly about the fragmentation of Oriya-speaking tracts, in anger and disgust - "The head is cut off from the trunk/And the feet lie elsewhere/The hands lie and rot/And what the eyes see is dead." In fact, Godabaris's anger against the injustice done to Orissa never abated. His sentiments in this regard were probably strongest among the Satyabadi group of writers. Beginning almost from the first decade of the 20th it continued as a major passion with him till his death, and found expression again and again in his writings with emotion and vehemence. Thus even in 1955, a year before his death, while addressing Utkal Sammilani, the tenor of his feelings was as unequivocal and specific as it used to be 50 years before- "Of course we have to consider the unity of India first. Our independence came a short while ago. We have to establish the unity of this great country by developing goodwill and amity among different States. For that we have to get ready even to have the ultimate sacrifice. But the unity of India cannot be achieved by only our sacrifice. The way the limbs of Mother Orissa are scattered now, if that continues like that, we would only be slackening the

knots of India, not strengthen them, A rich India can never be built on our burial ground. We should come out with strong determination to achieve our demands. That determination would be our strength behind our demands." Godabaris, along with Gopabandhu and Nilakantha, had romantic wistfulness at one level, particularly in their poetry, a legacy that continued from Radhanath and Madhusudan. But at another level, particularly in their prose, they remained rooted in the contemporary realities, and their strength lay in infusing a contemporary consciousness into Oriya literature, which was both highly significant and much needed.

Krupasindhu Mishra was born at Bira Harekrushnapur, near Puri, and served in Satyabadi School, first as a teacher and then as a headmaster. He was not a creative writer in the sense he did not write poems, stories etc. like Gopabandhu, Nilakantha and Godabaris. But he was a fine essayist, and wrote essays such as, *Prachya Bhukhandar Avyuthan* (The Rise of Eastern Hemisphere), *Bharat Itihasare Baidesik Akramana* (The Foreign Invasion in Indias History), *Ingrez Banikmanankar Odisavigaman* (The Coming of the English Traders to Orissa), *Ka* (Shadow) and *Adrustabada* (Fatalism) etc. related to history, sociology and philosophy. His two historical books were, one on the famous Barabati fort in Cuttack, now ruined *(Barabati Fort,* 1917), and the other on the famous sun-temple at Konark also ruined *(Konark,* 1919). In a way both the books were a glorification of Orissa's ancient past, by itself a strong trend with the Satyabadi group of writers. But at the same time, both were remarkable accounts of those famous ancient monuments, done for the first time in Oriya language, written with immense care, analysis and marshalling of facts, and though basically historical accounts, throbbed with fine literary sensibility. *Konark* begins with a wistful, melancholic tone- "Konark is one among the holy places of Orissa. This is situated at a distance of about 22 miles north-east of Puri, on the sea-beach. Though there are a few villages near it, yet it is now reduced to a

desolate sandy wilderness. Now the road from Puri to Konark is almost impassable. The entire stretch of the road is full of sands. Sands gets heated with the slightest ray of the sun, and at times one cannot lift his feet from the sands. In the entire road from Puri to Konark there is not a single house or a single shady tree where one can take shelter. In addition, it is now deserted. Except a ruined and dilapidated entrance, all other wealth of Konark has now set." But the tone at the end is one of conviction, consolation and strength - "Art is the expression of national soul, of national ideas. The Orissan temples, particularly Konark, casts a ray of high ideal of our forefathers on our weak hearts, and brings self-confidence of inheritance in us. In fact if one sees with his eyes, listens with ears, then these moss-grown ancient stones never appear as something lifeless and dead..."



2

PHASE II

(*i*)

In a period about 30 years preceding Independence, that is, in the twenties, thirties and forties, Oriya literary scene was full of activity. That was also the time when the atmosphere was charged with powerful socio-political movements. From inside the country, with the advent of Gandhiji, the struggle for freedom had taken a decisive turn, and from outside, the impact of Bolshevik Revolution and Soviet Russia along with new Marxist ideas had a powerful influence on the young minds. Besides, the continuing agitation for a separate province of Orissa, and a separate identity for the Oriyas, came to a partial fulfilment in 1936, when a separate province of Orissa was formed. These cumulatively contributed to a churning of mind, particularly of those who were sensitively and creatively effective. In addition, there were literary heritages and influences. Thus the heritage of modern Oriya poetry beginning from Radhanath and Madhusudan and through Satyabadi poets, was a rich and complex growth which provided models for the poets of the period who generally adopted its structure and trend. Secondly, the influence of contemporary Bengali poetry, particularly of Tagore, in whom most of the poets were well-versed, along with the general influence of 19th century. English Romantic poetry, which came as a part of the training and education, shaped attitudes and poetic motivations, and provided fruitful meeting grounds. Differently, related to an increasing socio-political awareness, and a sharp consciousness about social changes in manners, habits and conviction, and a deepening camaraderie with the downtrodden, poor, and the neglected parts of the society, an increasing desire could be noted among the writers towards greater production of novels. Thus by a rough estimate, beginning from

1878 till 1920, in about a period of 40 years, there were about 20 or 25 novels in Oriya. But from 1920 till Independence, the number increased considerably, and also achieved new and newer trends and attitudes, and in a period of 27 years, including 1947, we had about 250 novels, about one third of which were published only in the three years, 1945-47. In addition, the writers took pleasure in organizing themselves in movements and associations, and two such activities may be noted here.

One was called 'Sabuja Andolana' or 'Green Movement' and it was conceived as a poetic movement towards the end of the twenties, its leading spirits being Kalindi Charan Panigrahi (1901-1991), Baikunthanath Pattanaik (1904-1979), and Annada Sankar Ray (1904 - ?) who later migrated to Bengal where he made name as a considerable writer. They brought out a manifesto and called themselves 'Sabuja' (The Green), a direct reminder of 'Sabuja' in Tagore's popular poem *Sabujar Avijan* (The Invasion of Green), and the poetic movement as 'Sabuja Andolan'. They brought out a poetry-anthology entitled *Sabuja Kabita* (1931) wherein Annada Sankar's two poems, *Pralaya Prerana* (Incentive to Deluge) and *Srujan Swapna* (Dreams of Creation), set a tone of high rhetoric and youthful exuberance. This was followed by a journal entitled *Jugabina* (The Lyre of the Time, 1933) which was edited by Harihar Mahapatra, a member of the group, and was posed as the mouthpiece of the 'movement' and had a good deal of influence on the youngsters.

The second, and more vocal was 'Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad' (The Literary Association of the New Age). Whereas the Sabuja's origin was mainly literary, Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad was conceived as an offshoot of the prevailing socio-political ideas, that is, the prevailing progressive Marxist ideas that had emanated from Eastern Europe. It was organized by a group of politically left-oriented writers, headed by Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi (1907-1943), a brother of Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, who was incidentally

the founder-secretary of the Communist Party of Orissa. Bhagabati recruited an array of powerful writers and started the Sansad in 1935, and followed it up by a monthly mouthpiece entitled *Adhunika* (The Modern) in 1936, which he himself edited. They proclaimed against art for art's sake, and declared to make literature an agent of revolution and social change. The inaugural sessions in which almost every important writer of the time participated, continued from 26.11.1935 to 4.12.1935, at Cuttack, and acquired a good deal of publicity. The inaugural song of the Sansad almost rhetorically set out the tone for the self-conceived new role of the Association - "Awake, the youth of the new Age/Awake and break your fetters/Pour your heart's blood/Spread fire in million lives/ Break all bounds/Dry all tears/ Destroy all castes/ Unite all countries/ Blow the bugle of humanity/Let sorrows go/ Arise, awake." Ramprasad Singh, a writer and a leading member, put this purpose more succinctly in his paper *Bartamanara Sahityare Nutan Bhabadharar Abahan* (Welcoming New Ideas in Today's Literature)- 'If a revolution does not take place in the realm of ideas of the Oriya youth, if strong clashes do not occur in the world of his imagination, then it would not be possible to have any revolution in the field of literature. The experiments that have started in Russia relating to the present and future of mankind, in Oriya literature too, we have to begin the same experiment related to the Orissan part of the same humankind."

Both the Sabuja movement and the 'Nabajuga Sahitya' or the 'Progressive Literature' movement had their initial strength as well as their newness and freshness faded out by mid-forties. Yet their motivations and attitudes as well as the rhetorical components of their style, remained as subterranean forces in the totality of the changed poetic structure after Independence. It was a long journey from Radhanath-Madhusudan tradition - a journey which had strong links with the past, and yet, looked forward to new dispensation to come in future.

As has been said earlier, the decades immediately before Independence was a churning time - politically, socially as well as intellectually. Particularly it was a time of great activity, one of keen involvement and dedication in the field of literature. Biswanath Kar's *Utkal Sahitya* continued to be published, taking leadership in matters of literature as before. This was supported by Balkrushna Kar's *Sahakar* (1930) and Nilakantha Das's *Nababharat* (1934), that more than often gave a liberal coverage to the new trends of the period. Then there were little magazines that had a good deal of impact and influence, such as, *Baruni* (ed. Rajkishor Das, 1925), *Bhanja Prava* (ed. Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, 1932), *Jugabina* (ed. Harihar Mahapatra, 1933), *Dagaro* (ed.Laxmikanta Mahapatra, 1937), *Niakhunta* (ed. Godabaris Mahapatra, 1938), *Arati* (ed. Manmohan Mishra and Mayadhar Mansingh, 1940), and coming closer to Independence, *Sankha* (ed. Mayadhar Mansingh, 1945) and *Chaturanga* (ed. Brajendra Singh Deo, 1945). The general effect was substantial and the period threw up a number of powerful writers, pre-eminent among them were, Padmacharan Pattanaik (1885-1956), Laxmikant Mahapatra (1889-1953), Godabaris Mahapatra (1898-1965), Sm. Kuntala Kumari Sabat (1900-1938), Kalindi Charan Panigrahi Baikunthanath Pattanaik, Mayadhar Mansingh (1905-1973), Radhamohan Gadanayak (1911-2000), Anant Pattanaik (1912-1987), and Sachi Routray (1913-2004).

(ii)

Padmacharan Pattanaik was born in the village Panchagaon near Khurda Road railway station, in the erstwhile Puri district. He had his B.L. from Calcutta University, and practised at Puri from 1916 onwards, where he got settled, and also participated actively in the local socio-political activities. He wrote poetry, biographies and essays as well as books for children. But it was mainly in poetry that he made name and got established as a fine

poet by the middle of the twenties. His three important poetry collections were, *Padmapakhuda* (The Petals of Lotus, 1928) *Golap Guchha* (The Rose Bunches, 1932) and *Suryamukhi* (The Sun flower, 1945) that contained poems mostly written in the twenties and thirties. Padmacharan was basically a lyric poet who wrote on love, transience, and nature along with occasional patriotic exhortations almost in the manner of Satyabadi group of writers, and can be considered as providing a link between them and the emerging younger 'Sabuja' or romantic poets. The poet's most popular poem with a wistful, melancholic tone about Orissa's past was *Dhauli Pahad* (The Dhauli Hill, 1920) which dealt with high, patriotic sentiments related to Asoka's famous battle against Kalinga at Dhauli (B.C. 261), a hillock on the bank of the river Daya, near Bhubaneswar, and its consequences. The poem begins with a sense of melancholy and despondency ("Oh, Dhauli, Dhauli/ So silent today/ So eagerly looking for lost glories in Daya sands..") and ends with a tone of anger and resentment ("This is how the sun of Kalinga set in Daya sands/This is how Kalinga's glories/ Floated in the water of time's seas/... So many nations went ahead hand in hand/So many stamped their names in front,/But alas ! to my motherland of truth and courage/Why the gods so averse, so hostile !"). Differently, he talks of himself and his poetry in a different mood - "I have great hopes/I would be rich in poetry, / And I would be in hundred hearts/ When young men and women in love/ Would read my poems for all time to come." Padmacharan's poems had simple, musical structure, and were popular texts in schools for many years.

Laxmikant Mahapatra, who belonged to Bhadrak, about 100 kms from Cuttack towards north-east, like Padmacharan was also motivated by the contemporary trends of nationalism and patriotism, and can be considered like him, as providing a link between the Satyabadi writers and the new generation. But unlike Padmacharan he was a versatile writer, and wrote in many forms

such as, drama, poetry, short story and essay etc., and edited *Dagaro,* a quarterly, largely devoted to humour. He was at the same time a keen musician and a song-writer, and also developed a strong strain of humour and satire in his writings. His books include musical dramas, such as *Basant Vilas, Kaliya Dalan, Braja Barjan* etc.; historical and mythological dramas, such as *Karna* and *Chandrahasa;* humorous and satirical dramas related to contemporary political situation and freedom-movement, such as, *Panchamruta* (Five Streams of Nectar) and *Naba Ramayana* (The New Ramayana); a satirical prose tract exposing the follies and foibilites of people involved in freedom-fight, entitled *Asahajogira Atmakatha* (The Autobiography of a Non-Cooperationist); poetry collections, both humorous parodies and mystical contemplation, such as, *Lalika* (Parodies) *Rasa Sahitya, Chatak Chandrahas Champu,* and *Jiban Sangita* (The Songs of Life) poems with mystical tenor; and stories, essays, and an unfinished novel entitled *Kanamamu* (The One - Eyes Uncle), most of which were written in the third and fourth decades.

But Laxmikant excelled in poetry, and got reputed as a fine lyricist and parodist. He composed a number of songs with Vaishnavite themes for his musical dramas, In addition he wrote a number of short poems with lyrical structure based on personal emotions of joy and happiness, as Padmacharan or even earlier Nandakishor, Godabaris etc. wrote. Then there was his *Jiban Sangita,* a collection of 77 lyrics, some of the very best that he ever wrote, that had a semi-mystical perception of beauty and divinity, that combined deep agony with deep joy. And finally he composed such songs and lyrics that were motivated an intense patriotism and love for the land, which included his famous partiotic exhortation *Bande Utkal Janani* (I Worship thee, Mother Utkal) which was sung in a session of Utkal Sammilani and has become an almost national song of Orissa. Similar was the case with him as a parodist. Laxmikant had always a sense of humour

in whatever he wrote - a distinct legacy from Phakirmohan who had often an imperceptible structure of humour in his writing. Particularly *Lalika* was a collection of fine parodies (almost first time in Oriya literature) of popular ancient songs of Orissa, including famous Champu songs of Kavisurya Baladev Rath on Radha-Krushna theme, a surprising creative act when one considers that Laxmikant himself was a devout Vaishnav. But the poems in *Rasa Sahitya* as well as *in Panchamruta* and *Naba Ramayana* etc. had different motivations - motivations based on distinct socio-political consciousness and attitudes. The topics that the poet chose for himself were broad-based, beginning from non-cooperation and salt-march etc. to election and cabinet-formation, as well as on individual political leaders. These were often tinged with humour and irony, even at times, sharp satire, but almost always with an underlying motive to improve human conditions as far as possible. Laxmikant was struck by a foul disease in early youth, which he had to endure throughout his life. But what his writing manifested was a free, playful spirit which not only laughed at every available opportunity and effectively denied his own misfortune, but also at the same time could lift his suffering to a realm of beauty and joy. Laxmikant's achievement was substantial and he is rated as a unique creative spirit before Independence.

Probably, one or two examples would be apt at this point. Thus this is how he meditates in his *Jiban Sangita,* waiting for the divine touch to materialize :

I have opened my heart's door
And waiting for him to come,
'Oh, look, he comes', somebody says
And I keep awake day and night.
I get startled at times
When I hear his soft footsteps.
And I sit and wait in pain
Sharing the agonies perpetually.

Or differently there is a tone of defiance against him who took away everything:

What glory you get
If you deprive me of everything,
Whatever you gave you have taken away
What else you want to take away now.
He who hopes for things runs after you
But he who has nothing to hope for
How can you frighten him so.

Godabaris Mahapatra was born at Banapur, very close to the place of Godabaris Mishra, and was also a close associate and friend of the latter. He got his academic training in the famous Satyabadi School under Mishra's supervision, and imbibed the School's ideals of nationalism and patriotism both in his life and in his writings. Mahapatra got involved in social activities as well as in journalism from early youth, and at different times was associated with Sashibhusan Rath's journal *Asha* and Balakrushna Kar's *Sahakar,* and also wrote novels for Kar's *Ananda Lahari* series of novels. Subsequently, in 1938, he founded, and edited *Niakhunta,* a socio-political journal of courageous dissent that aimed at the exposure of corruption in public life, where he used to write almost single-handedly all the pieces. In fact, Mahapatra's inclination towards literature began very early in his life when he was a student in the M.E. School at Banapur. The piece was in poetry, written around 1915, and was entitled *Banapur.* It was written in the manner of Radhanath Roy's famous Kavya *Chilika* and got immediate attention from no less a person than the famous editior of *Mukura* who helped to get it published, and in a way launched young Godabaris in Oriya literature. Subsequently, Mahapatra wrote other poems such as, *Usha* (Dawn), *Nirjhar* (Stream), *Pradosha* (Evening) *Sisira* (Winter), *Nitimala* (String of Morals) and *Pushpanjali* (Flower Offering) etc. which were collected in a volume entitled *Pravat Kusum* (Morning Flowers)

which was also published from Mukura Press. The book was dedicated to Godabaris Mishra and established Mahapatra's reputation as a young promising poet.

Then other poetical volumes followed, such as *Atmabali* (Self Sacrifice), *Chithi* (Letters) and *Ruparekha* (The Profiles) etc. The poems were simple in structure, personal in content, and showed accepted sentiments about nature, transience and personal relationship, the model being Godabaris Mishra. But it was not so much in poetry as in novels and short stories that he made his mark, and here again the model was Mishra. His novels include such titles as *Rajdrohi* (The Royal Traitor), *Bandira Maya* (The Attractions of a Prisoner), *Premapatha* (In the Path of Love) and *Bidrohi* (The Revolutionary) etc., and story-volumes, such titles as *Katha O Kahani* (Tales), *Ebe Madhya Banchichi* (I Still Live), *Iswaranka Pakhaku Chithi* (A Letter to God), and *Garibar Kahinki* (Why of the Poor) etc. His novels, which took frames from foreign classics, dealt with uncertain and torturous conditions of the 17th and 18th century Orissa, with a motive to suggest the nation's past glories. In *Premapatha* particularly, which was based on contemporary social practices, he shows his resentment against the society's practice to marginalize the woman ('The woman of this country is like the moneylenders windowless stack- room for paddy'.) His stories likewise dealt with Orissa's history, personalities, social habits as well as with Oriya family life and much-needed reforms in Oriya society. Their locations were mostly confined to Banapur, Khallikot, Ganjam and Bhanjanagar areas, that is, the area Godabaris knew well, and they show deep insight into social habits and social change.

Godabaris's creative career extended beyond Independence when he emerged (particularly between 1951 and 1961) as a substantial poet who introduced a strong satiric-mode into Oriya poetry. The social consciousness remained strong as ever. But responses deepened and attitudes became sharper.

Kuntala Kumari Sabat was born at Jagdalpur, in Bastar (now in Chhatisgarh) where her father Daniel Sabat was a doctor and a Christian by faith. Her early years till she became 14, were spent in Burma (currently Myanmar) where her father had migrated for professional purposes. At around 1915 she returned to Khurda, near Bhubaneswar, her ancestral place, along with her mother, brothers and sisters while her father stayed back in Burma. Subsequently she read in Ravenshaw Girls' High School at Cuttack, and Cuttack Medical School, from where she completed her medical education in 1921 (L.M.P). First she took up a Government job, then resigned from it in 1927, and went over to Delhi where she set up a private practice that earned her immense fame and reputation. She got married in 1928, but died untimely in 1938, during child-birth. Apart from her great popularity as a doctor, she also got eminence as a social-activist, and was continuously associated, almost at the top level, with various movements and agitation for female emancipation as well as for freedom struggle. Her famous presidential address *Nari Swarajya* (Female Emancipation) on the occasion of pan-Indian Aryan Women Conference at Bareilly in 1932, conveyed her range of thought as well as immense courage and openness of mind. Kuntala excelled in poetry, though at the same time she wrote novels, and essays in the form of addresses in the meetings and conferences, as well as despatches and letters that were published in Oriya journals. Her first published work was a book of poetry, entitled *Anjali* (Offerings, 1922). Her subsequent poetical volumes were, *Uchhwas* (Emotion, 1924), *Archana* (Worship, 1927), *Sphulinga* (The Spark of Fire, 1929), *Awahan* (The Challenge, 1930) and *Prema Chintamoni* (The Jewel of Love, 1930) etc. She had six novels including *Bhranti* (A Mistake, 1923), *Kali Bohu* (The Dark Bride, 1925), *Raghu Arakhita* (1928) and *Parasmani* (Touchstone, 1933) etc. Her essays and despatches ranged over a number of issues relevant and appropriate for the times, such as, on female

emancipation, socialism, religious dogmatism, untouchability , the poverty and distress of the Oriyas, and the unification of Oriya-speaking areas etc.

Kuntala's poetry generally conformed to the major trends of the then Oriya poetry, and developed strong personal aspects related to love and mysticism, nationalistic and patriotic sentiments, compassion and sympathy for the poor and the distressed, and a bitterness of spirit at the plight of the Oriyas and particularly Oriya women. Thus *Anjali* contained songs of love and submissions dedicated at the alter to nature with a keen religious perception, *Archana* showed strong patriotic sentiments particularly related to the distress and the plight of Orissa, and *Sphulinga* provided a spark of fire to ignite youth to excitement, confidence and work etc. Similarly her novels also conformed to the contemporary trends as related to contemporary society, that is, the social habits and manners, social conservatism and smallness, the plight of women particularly of widows, and the evil of child-marriage. Her description, in each, was graphic and her attitudes were normally reformistic and moralistic. Thus *Kali Bohu* is a bitter castigation of the evils that attend to a child-widow, *Parasamani* shows how a family without compassion, sympathy and understanding is without the vitality of life, and *Raghu Arakhita* records how the Western education and manners have eaten into the entrails of our life and conditions of living.

Some examples, particularly from her poetry, would be pertinent. Thus this is how she feels at the coming of a new dawn (*Nabina Prate*) - "This new life this auspicious new-dawn/Whose sweet song enraptures my mind./ My mind sinks in shyness/ My heart listens as if lost/ And sweetness vibrates in my memory secretly." or, the feelings for love (*Prema Kare Kimpa*)- "Why should I be proud that I love/ It is my duty to love/ Oh my friend, you have given me rights to love/And the poor being is so grateful to you," or, the feeling of despair (*Se Ki Bujhe*)- "Does he

understand my heart's agony/Does he understand my pain ?/ Does he understand my painful sighs/Does he understand my heart", or, differently, a strident call to the youth to rise (*Tarunar Abahan*):

Let not my tongue talk of despair
Let not my nation hear it,
Let one and half crore souls rise in resurgence
Let them rise in new strength and power.

Kalindi Charan Panigrahi was born at Biswanathpur, about 12 kms. from Bhubaneswar, on the way to Puri. The family was affluent. His father, Swapneswar Panigrahi practised as a pleader at Puri and kept all his children with him. He was also reputed as a writer, particularly for his philosophical book *Atma Darsanare Biswachitra Kalpana* (To See Cosmos in Ourself). His two other sons (other than Kalindi Charan) were also writers, they being Dibyasingh and Bhagabati Charan. Kalindi Charan himself was a versatile writer. He wrote in a number of genres, and everywhere he made a mark. Though poetry was his first love and continued to be so throughout his life, at different times, he wrote stories, fiction, drama, travelogues, essays, literary criticism, and towards later part of his life, a remarkable autobiography entitled *Ange Jaha Niveichi* (Whatever I have Experienced). He worked at Baripada, and subsequently in Cuttack, where he finally settled in a house of his own that he named 'Swapnapuri'. Among many honours, he was awarded Padmabhusan by Government of India, and was chosen as a Fellow of Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. His daughter, Ms. Nandini Satpathy, also a writer, became subsequently Chief Minister of Orissa. A substantial part of Kalindi Charan's writing was done in a period of about 25 years before Independence, that brought him immense fame and prestige, and established him as a foremost writer of the period. His books, most of which were published in the fourth decade, include, in poetry- *Manenahin* (Can't Remember), *Chhuritie Loda* (A Dagger Needed), *Khyanika Satya* (Momentary Truth), and *Mahadipa* (The

Great Lamp) etc., in novel- *Matira Manisha* (Man of the Soil), *Muktagadar Khyudha* (The Hunger of Muktagada), *Amarachita* (Eternal Signet), and *Luhar Manisha* (Man of Steel, 1947) etc.; in story - *Dwadashi* (Twelve), *Sagarika* (Sea Daughter), *Sesha Rashmi* (Last Rays) and *Rasifala* (Horoscope) etc.; in drama- *Priyadarshi* (Priyadarshi), *Saummya O Padmini* etc.; in prose and essay - *Netrutwa O Netrutwa* (Leadership and Leadership), *Sahityika* (Literary), *Prabandha Sahitya* (Essays), and *Sahitya Sanchayana* (Literary Collection) etc.

Kalindi Charan's involvement with poetry began early, almost from the beginning of the third decade, and he wrote almost all his poems in the next about 25 years. The poems were mostly lyrics or personal poems with compact rhythmic structure and concentrated on such themes as nature, loved memories of the past, adoration of beauty, and spiritual and mystical feeling etc. to which, around mid-thirties some new motivations were added, such as a strong socio-political awareness and a larger apprehension of realities around. Thus a poem like *Manenahin* lists with a melancholic pang how sweet graces of the past are forgotten and sweet faces no longer exist ("I can't remember how many faces rose under my eyes/And how many touches along my body startled me..."), and a poem like *Pasori Delire Simulipala* (Simulipala, I Forget You) narrates how, and with what a strong homesick feeling, the poet goes back to the days he spent at Simulipala, a distant mountain-village in Mayurbhanj. Similarly, in another poem, *Chhanda Nayika* (The Heroin of the Rhymes), he visualizes the adorable heroin of his rhymes in the context of love and nature ("The night was floating in the sweet laughter of the south-wind/ And you came, why oh my lady, so quietly./The fifth-day moon was all over the sky/And I didn't know for whom I waited./ The night slept under an intense moon/Why did you come, why, Oh my lady, so quietly ?"). On the other hand, there are poems like *Mahadipa* which proclaims how the lights of hope will spread in

the universe like the Great Lamp of Lord Shiva dispelling darkness, or, *Chhuritiea Loda* which shows anger at the unfair designs of life and seeks to redress that through violent action. A poem entitled *Agami* (Oncoming), published in 1942, gives the poet's 'progressive' socio-political awareness most succinctly- "I compose poems of a great society/Where everybody gets a room of his own/Where everybody gets a handful of rice and milk, / And all boys and girls fit and eligible/Always get two pieces of clothes,/ And nobody is stopped from getting education/And nobody has right to remain unemployed/The Government provides work for everybody/ And everybody has a right to speak./ That society, that society alone I dream/I sit and compose poems for that society alone". On the whole Kalindi Charan's poems showed compact imagination and fine lyrical emotions, and contributed substantially to the total body of new poetry that emerged in the twenties and thirties.

But Kalindi Charan, as has been noted, was a versatile writer, and made his mark in novels and stories too. His novels had strong social consciousness and dealt with a number of contemporary social situations such as plight of women, child-marriage and widowhood on the one hand, and on the other, the tyranny of kings and zamindars, the coercive manners of Government officials, the distress of common people and the simmering discontent against the tyrannous rule. One of his novels particularly, *Matira Manisha,* published in 1931, was a landmark creation. It dealt with social change, break-down of joint-family and the emerging Gandhian ideals of goodness, good human behaviour, and wholesome human living - a new and highly significant creation in the total ouevres of Oriya novels till that time, and has remained so even today. The stories too, that numbered about 37, had similarly strong social-consciousness and dealt with a number of contemporary social issues and superstitions.

Kalindi Charan also excelled in prose that had preciseness, balance and point of view, organized in felicitous conversational

style - a good addition to the prose legacy of the Satyabadi writers. His essays, about 42, ranged from purely factual to narrative, descriptive, critical and to thoughtful, reflective ones, Some good pieces were, *Begahin Unnatira Lakhyana* (Speed is Sign of Progress), *Biswarupa Darsana* (To Behold the Cosmic Vision), *Uttaradhikar* (Inheritance), *Tyaga O Prema* (Sacrifice and Love), *Sahityare Paribartita Pesa* (The Changing Ideas in Literature) and *Kahi Puchhi Jane Je* (He Who Knows How to Speak) etc. This is how he writes about those who have acquired the skill in talks - "A limited number of intellectuals in this world have acquired the skill in talks. They are not that competent to do a work by themselves. But they are quite competent to get the work done by others. They are not like rich business bosses to snore through death after excessive food, but are competent to stimulate people who have nothing to die through starvation... From touts in the villages to pleaders in courts and political leaders in the Assemblies and Parliaments they are many who dabble in selling shrimps through talks. They are accustomed to cover the harshest realities under a veneer of talks."

Baikunthanath Pattanaik was born at Badamba, an ex-State, about 100 kms, from Cuttack. Subsequently, he read in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and joined Orissa Education Department, from where he finally retired in the cadre of Headmaster of Orissa Government Schools. He stayed alternatively in Cuttack and in his parental place at Badamba, and earned a great reputation as a very sensitive and fine poet. In fact, unlike his close friend Kalindi Charan who was a versatile writer, Baikunthanath largely stuck to one form, that is, poetry. His poems were mainly collected in three volumes, entitled *Arunasri* (The Graces of Dawn), *Kavyasanchayana* (Collected Poetry) and *Uttarayan*, (The Movement Towards North), and were written in a period of about 25 years, from the middle of the twenties till the end of the forties. A general perception of nature, love and beauty could be seen in

many of his poems that were specially remarkable for their intensity of poetic emotion and imagination. In addition, a mystic contemplation of life is presented by the side of an awareness of hard realities of life. His language is often lyrical, and the poems show a perfect sense of rhyme and rhythm.

Baikunthanath's best work was *Kabyasanchayan,* which was also one of the best poetical volumes in the pre-Independence Oriya literature. It was published around 1942 / 1943, and contained about 160 poems, a substantial part of the poems that he had written before that, and a large number of his relatively more important poems, that exhibit his major poetic perception and attitudes. A discussion of some such poems would be pertinent. For example, one of his early poems, published in *Utkal Sahitya* in 1923. was *Naba Jauban* (New Youth). The poem is a rhetorical declaration of the powers of the youth, in the first person, related to love, nature and youthful perception of beauty. Thus the youth's first declaration ("I am new youth/ I have come/I am companion to sweetness/ My hands full of flowers/ I move with sweetness daily/ I float in dreams/I kiss dreams/I am youth/ New Youth") goes over to a statement of its activities ("I give my message in silent songs/ In the simple hearts of all creations/I make them laugh/ Make them float in happiness/In endless dreams/ In moonshine/ In spilling mirror-like water...") and finally to lover's union ("Oh, come, come my dearest/We will build a house in south-wind/ In sweet love we forget all/All we know and do not know."). Similar sentiments related to youthful emotion and joy can also he seen in another popular early poem entitled *Se dese Jibi* (I Will go to that Land), published in 1924 - "Where the evening looks lazily in softness/ Where the south wind sings songs of endless love/Where the ever new youth plays on the lyre/I will go there, to that land alone."

The poet's early romantic exhortations slowly changed as the years advanced, and newer perceptions and attitudes slowly emerged. Thus in a slightly later poem entitled *Kalpanamayee*

(Oh, my Imagination) where creative imagination is invoked as a lady associated both with youthful exuberance as well as with sorrow, dryness and emptiness of heart. It begins with a sense of joy- "Oh, my Imagination/In your bright, early light/My world smiled/Bright dawn in youthful life/Holy stars in restless dreams/ Your touch brought songs of life/Oh, my Imagination, in rhymes." But it moves over to other emotions, such as lack of joy, emptiness of heart and anxiety of mind - "Oh, eternally holy / The winter wind now blows sharply/The blossoms fall/The rhymes sleep in the fragrance of flowers in empty gardens / Only emptiness in mind/Only pain and tears...". Yet the poet's desire for beauty, and the hope that he may be able to reach it remains, as in the poem *Arupa Kusuma* (Formless Flower), written about the time the former was written, where the poet speaks of his perception of beauty and how he thirsts for it :

> Your beauty sparkled today
> In the seven colours of rainbow
> And I desired to pluck the formless flower.
> The rains continue to fall
> The golden sea of love spills over,
> I have no language today, Oh my dear,
> To say how my love burns,
> How I desire to pluck the flower of the sky
> In endless thirst.

This desire for beauty extends to an awareness of a controlling force behind life's activities, as in the poem *Chira Nabina* (Forever New) which speaks how the poet's heart has been filled in many ways and all his songs of joy and separation have been inspired by an unknown subtle touch :

> All that's old merges in his body
> And it emerges again as the new one,
> He plans rhymes beyond all borders
> He is the controller of all poets,

My feeble language expresses his poetry

He is the perceiver of all knowledge and ecstasy.

The best poem of this mood was *Jatra Sangita* (The Journey's Song) that was written in the thirties. It is a fine, sensitive poem, probably the finest in the collection, and achieves a remarkable integration of poetic moods with a tough, yet resilient structure. Its main motivation is 'Jatra' (Journey) - journey from constraining factors to where these factors do not exist, and an invocation to life's God (*jibana debata*) who makes it a reality and fills the cup of life in many ways, In the process the poet speaks of human relationship, of love for nature, and the cravings for beauty and joy. It begins with a sense of fulfilment,

You have filled my cup of life so many ways

How can I say you have not given anything ?

Then the desire to move out, beyond small and limited happiness,

I am the swan of Manas, I will fly over there

It's my fault that I move around here aimlessly.

I will leave all, float across the seas

I will cross the Himalayas while it's time.

and the realization that the eternal music sounds even in a rotting, decaying life,

I am the winter tree, my leaves are rotten

They fall off in cold touch, in dismay

....

Listen to his flute in your heart's arbour

See his holy coming along the heart's wind,

He gives life, takes away life

Haven't you seen how he smiles in your heart-

That great generous being !

Finally again, the motif of journey returns, and the poet asks his mind to go to 'eternal Madhuban', and behold 'the dance of the dearest being'. That would be, he maintains, the 'end' of his journey,

In a moment Oh, traveller !

Your journey will end,
All your doubts and troubles will end.
You will be blessed with holy vision
And your sins and mistakes would be no more.

Jatra Sangita is a poem of intense craving - a craving for joy, beauty, and permanence, and its mystical dimension has been realized under an awareness of hard realities.

Differently, there are other poems where the poet's awareness of reality is sharper and more direct. Some such poems are, *Baidhabya* (Widowhood), *Bannya Biplaba* (Flood Havoc), *Adhunika Barbarata* (The Modern Barbarism), *Riksabala* (Rickshawala) and *Uma* (Uma) etc. The poems deal with either social or individual distress as well as with the general plight occasioned by flood or war. Though usually in such cases the poet works out a palliative and puts a veneer towards a tolerant spiritual or moral attitude, yet the pointer is often towards the individual who suffers and becomes a victim. To this extent the poem *Uma* is most outspoken and direct. It speaks of two segments of a woman's life, before marriage and after marriage, and tells how the joy and vitality of life moves over to suffering and agony of a death-like situation occasioned by social factors where males enjoy and women slave like beasts. But on the whole, it is a poem like *Jatra Sangita* which represents Baikunthanath's essential mode and perception, as well as his perfect command over language, particularly the lyrical part of it, and establishes him not only as a substantial poet but as one of the finest poets of pre-Independence Oriya literature.

Mayadhar Mansingh was born in the village Nandala, in Parikud, inside Chilika. He was educated at Khurda, Cuttack, Patna University, and Durham University (U.K.) from where he got his Ph.D. in English, the first-ever Oriya writer to get such a foreign degree. He worked in various capacities in the Education Department of the Government of Orissa - a school teacher, a

Lecturer in the colleges, Educational Advisor to the Eastern States Agency, Adult Education Officer, Inspector of Schools, and the Principal of Gangadhar Meher College at Sambalpur, from where he retired. Even after retirement he worked in the Utkal University in charge of preparing Oriya Encyclopedia. On the whole, a career that was devoted professionally to education and education-related work. But Mansingh's first love was for literature, an involvement that established him as a substantial writer and poet in the thirties and forties. He wrote poems and Kavyas, plays and playlets, travels, biography, autobiography, essays and criticism, and even a novel. His earliest poems were written when he was a school student at Khurda, and his first famous poetry book, a book entitled *Dhupa* (Incense), which was a collection of sensational love-poems, was published in 1931. His other, relatively more important books include, in poetry, *Konark* (1926), *Sadhab Jhia* (The Trader's Daughter, 1929), *Hemasashya* (Hema Crops, 1933-'Hema' literary means gold, but the name was probably taken from his wife Hemalata to whom he was married in 1932). *Hemapushpa* (Hema Flowers, 1935), *Premapushpa* (Love Flowers, 1935), *Premasashya* (Love Crops, 1945), *Kamalayana* (Kamala's House, 1946), *Jiban Chita* (Life's Pyre, 1947), *Matibani* (The Message of the Earth, 1947), *Bapu Tarpana* (Offerings to Bapu, 1948), *Swarajyasrama* (Swarajya Ashram, 1952), and *Krusa* (The Cross, 1956) etc.; in poetic plays, *Puspita* (Blossomed, 1930), *Pujarini* (The Lady-Worshipper, 1932) and *Nastanida* (The Broken Nest, 1938); in travelogue, *Paschima Pathika* (The Traveller to the West, 1947); in essays and criticism, *Kabi O Kabita* (The Poets and Poetry, 1948). *Odia Samaj O Sahitya* (Oriya Society and Literature, 1951) *Sikhyaka O Sikhyayatana* (The Teacher and Teaching Places) etc.

Mansingh excelled in poetry, and his great reputation as a fine, sensitive poet rested largely on his long poems as well as on innumerable short poems that he wrote. As with his contemporaries, so in him too, one aspect of his poetic

understanding, in a way a continuation of earlier Radhanath, Madhusudan as well as Satyabadi traditions, could be seen first of all in his repeated references to nature and nature's beauty as well as a contemplation of beauty as such, and secondly, in patriotic sentiments related to Orissa, and thirdly in a semi-mystical perception of a power behind the factors of creation. But the other aspect is more person-oriented, that is, more individualized and related to the poet's personal pangs of love on the one hand, and strong socio-political awareness on the other.

Two good examples of the first aspect would be his two early poems, *Konark* and *Mahanadire Jyotsna Vihar. Konark* gives the poet's reactions to the ruined temple very graphically. It functions at two levels, one, reality, that is, the past and the present - the past when the temple was constructed and remained in full glory, an object of great beauty and pride, and the present, when it is in ruins, an object of great remorse. But the more interesting part of the poem lies in its romantic projection - the temple rising from the blue sea, like goddess Laxmi, in resplendent beauty and youthfulness, to the utter amazement of all concerned. *Konark* is a romantic visualization of the poet's contemplation of beauty as such - a beauty in which nature also participates ("Under the silvery laugh of full-moon nights/ In the whitened waves of the sea/ Nymphs in amorous dances sang your song/ And trees drenched your young head with silvery water."). Similar sentiments can also be seen in the second poem, which is about a boat-jouney in a moonlit night in the river Mahanadi, near Cuttack. The poem begins with a startled realization of the great beauty laid out in front ("Lo, what great beauty floats in front/ How can I describe my bewitched feelings"), moves over to a contemplation of the past glory of the country and remorse at what has been lost ("At the end of that glory, alas / Why didn't the destiny end this nation"), and finally to the perception of a semi-mystical power that rolls through all things :

He is truth, goodness, beauty
He is everywhere, packed in all particles,
Cause of eternal play, eternally playful
He creates his great altar in a moment......

One is reminded of Madhusudan Rao, and at a distance, English Romantic poet Wordsworth.

The second aspect is in Mansingh's poetic attitudes, particularly in his attitude towards love, developed at a slightly later period. Initially it was the intensity of first love, and the most famous book was *Dhupa.* The poems of *Dhupa* deal with different elements of love's first encounter, such as, joy, excitement, fear, anxiety, expectation, agony etc. and almost for the first time in modern Oriya poetry, held up love-communication between two persons as an intense, involved theme. Thus the lover's tryst in a dark, clouded night is graphically described - "Lo, now she comes, walking slowly/She leaves her house to meet the dearest,/ The night is dark, the sky clouded/ The stars few, and lightening sparkles,/The town is quiet and roads lonely/And women have put out lamps in their houses." And secondly and differently, the startled elation at the union at the end of the tryst is graphically remembered - "Under this mango tree that day/The bangles of my lady pressed around my neck. / The moonlit night was excited at the touch of the south wind/ The birds of the forest sang at a distance furtively/ The moonshine and the shadow created illusions under the tree/ And the love-lorn lady hung from my neck/ That day, under this mango tree." But the poet's attitudes towards love slowly changed as we come to his subsequent collections, such as *Hemasashya, Hemapushpa* and *Premasashya* etc. It took up a different timber, beyond physicalities, towards a mental calm and tranquillity,.to an understanding of love as the most dependable binding force between two adult persons. A good example is the sonnet *Hemant Pravat* (Autumn Morning), which combines the beauty of a late autumn morning with the feelings of the poet for

his lady-love who has just taken her bath, a portrait of calm, tranquil beauty - "Then into the house entered my dearest/ Freshly bathed/ Startled I thought/ Is she a part of the golden autumn." Differently, in the poem *Punarmilan* (Reunion) the poet's anxiety to meet the lady after a long absence is resolved excitedly on the threshold :

My body shivers in happy apprehension
Where is she, Laxmi of my house ?
I am now at home - Is there nobody there ?
Suddenly I heard footsteps and movement of clothes,
As I looked around to know-
The beauty of my cottage stood before me,
Our eyes mingled, and then startled, our bodies.

Mansingh's socio-political awareness could be seen in his still later poetical volumes, such as *Bapu Tarpana, Swarajyasrama* and *Kamalayan* etc. *Bapu Tarpana* was a collection of 16 poems, occasioned by the assassination of Gandhiji, and were mostly motivated towards an adoration of that great soul, and towards a desire that Gandhiji's ideals should bring an end to all discord, untruth and barbarism, and raise this country to the level of high benefit for the people. On the other hand, the poems in *Swarajyasrama,* the title being the name of the headquarters of Orissa's Congress Party at Cuttack at that time, show the poet's strong reaction to chicanery, selfishness and duplicity that came over politics and administration after Independence, that largely became hostile to the welfare and common good of the people. *Kamalayan* too, a largely humanist document about the activities and sacrifices of a patriotic social worker, was motivated by a similar desire to anatomize the contemporary socio-political fabric. Mansingh's creative talent was multifaceted and had a long range. But he excelled in poetry, and particularly like Baikunthanath, in projecting a highly sensitive imagination dealing with love, nature, beauty and a semi-mystical perception etc. that established him as a major writer during the Pre-Independence period.

Radhamohan Gadanayak, Anant Pattanaik and Sachi Routray, all had the beginning of their creative careers from late twenties and by Independence they had achieved reputation as fine poets, though in each case, the respective career extended beyond Independence, and achieved new turns and motivation and acquired new significance and respectability. But in the thirties and forties they largely conformed and contributed considerably to the prevailing trends in poetry, such as, romantic overtones and motivation on the one hand, and progressive, left-oriented ideals on the other. Thus whereas Gadanayak mainly conformed to the first trend, both Pattanaik and Routray combined the two. Gadanayak was born in the village Kalandapal, near Anugul; Pattanaik at Chanahata, near Cuttack; and Routray at Khurda. Each spent his adult life mostly in Cuttack (though Routray also spent a long period in Calcutta), as had been the case with most of the writers we have referred to above, since Cuttack was not only the largest town, but also the centre of literature and culture in the pre-Independence Orissa.

Some of the earlier work of Gadanayak were in translation-translations from *Meghaduta, Omar* Khayam and *Sorab and Rustum*. All these were published at later dates. So also his first poetic play, on Kalidas's life, entitled *Kalidas* (written in 1933, published in 1940). All these were characterized by an impeccable rhyming structure, and fine lyricism - the qualities that became the hallamark of Gadanayak in all that he wrote. The short poems that he wrote at this time, were later collected in a substantial poetic volume, entitled *Kavya Nayika* (The Poetry as Heroine, 1943), which so far remains as one of the best collections of Gadanayak's poetry. His other poetical volumes published by about 1950 were, *Biplabi Radhanath* (Revolutionary Radhanath, 1938), *Utkalika* (Related to Utkal, 1945), *Smaranika* (Memorable, 1950) and *Mausumi* (The Monsoon, 1951) etc. A number of poems written during this period were also published later on, in such

volumes as *Kaisorika, Dipasikha* and *Banarajinila.* On the whole, the poems of Gadanayak written during this period broadly remind such themes in Baikunthanath or Mansingh - a young poet's preoccupation with love, nature and a semi-mystical perception of an unknown force in life, along with a vague desire to escape from the turmoils of life. An early poem *Apathagami* (Along Untrodden Way) shows this desire to escape exculsively - to escape from the routine, normal life to an unknown, untasted life; and another poem *Chirantani* (Eternal) expresses the poet's sensitiveness to nature's beauty that changes along with the changes in season, and captivates the poet's heart. Similarly another poem was *Se Mora Snehalata* (She is my Creeper of Affection) where the poet records his love-pangs at the beauty of a youthful lady going to a temple for worship. A good illustrative poem that shows the poet's such preoccupations with love, nature, lyricism etc. was *Mausumi* (The Monsoon), a slightly later poem which was distantly modelled on Shelley's *Ode to Westwind.* The poem begins with an address to the monsoon, particularly to its power - "In the ripples of scattered power/In full force/I have rushed/The monsoon/ Over the earth/.....I rain hailstorm fiercely/ I bring storms and rains maddeningly...". But slowly this awareness of power goes over to an atmosphere of soft love - "I was swinging happily in the lap of blue beautiful ocean/ On the cheeks and tresses of my lady-friend, the wave/In love and happy love-talks I touched her/ And said, 'O my dearest, dear' / ....I fell on her naked, youthful thighs and breast/ I kissed her lips and sucked her foam of laughter..." As has been said earlier, Gadanayak excelled in lyricism and soft romantic sentiments, and found a significant place in the pre-Independence literature.

The young poet who wrote the inaugural song of Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad (1935) and provided the take-off ground for the new progressive poetry, was Anant Pattanaik. But Pattanaik's poetic career went beyond the Sansad's period which petered out by mid-

forties, whereas Pattanaik's career continued after Independence and except *Raktasikha* (The Flame of Blood, 1939), his first poetry collection, all others were published after Independence. Even his lone story-collection *Chadha Uttara* (The Climb and the Descent) that contained stories written before Independence, was published after Independence. But apart from providing the poetic voice to Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad, Pattanaik also wrote independent of that and his poems occasioned by Gandhi's assassination, the collection entitled *Tarpana Kare Aji,* (I Submit my Obeisance Today, 1949) bear testimony to that. Yet by and large his attitudes remained Marxism-oriented, which can be seen in a large number of his poems. For example, in a poem entitled *Ye Mai Dibas* (This May-Day) he writes generally - "We carry the bodies of mothers and wives/The wailings of children pierce our ears/The gun of justice smokes in our hands/ And we take thundering oaths." Elsewhere in a poem entitled *Are Durbhaga Desha* (Oh, my Unfortunate Country) he is more specific- "The revolution knocks at the door/The poor comes to help the poor/The proletariats fight/ .... And oh, my country/Search for the source of life/Search for revolution/....". Or, extolling the proletariat in a poem entitled *Sarbahara* (Proletariat) he writes- 'We poured our blood all through our life/ We built all buildings/We provided strength to administration/We are the proletariat/.... Let all the deprived of the world/ Let all labourers and farmers/Unite with us/ Without fear without hesitation/Let the world tremble/Let the sky, the air, and the suckers tremble/ Let there be smile of equality in the world/ And let the mountain peaks fall down." But at the same time an interesting aspect of Pattanaik's poetry can also be noted in its mixing up with such contemporary trend that was oriented towards a contemplation of love, nature and the romantic self, though Pattanaik's approach was different and his poetry was often related to the realities of life and provided the related sense of agony and suffering.

Sachi Routray's earliest published poetry book was *Patheya* (For the Road). It was published in 1932, when he was about 20. Next to be published was a poetic-play entitled *Purnima* (The Full-moon-Day), and even before *Patheya* he had a number of poems published in different journals (collected laterly in 2001, entitled *Adya Rachana).* All these poems conformed to the strong romantic trend prevalent at that time. The best book of this trend was *Pallisree* (Rural Graces) published in 1941, which portrayed the simple, captivating beauty of an Orissan village in a highly graceful structure. But this was only one aspect of Routray's poetry. The other aspect was equally strong and probably more eloquent- the aspect where he joined his voice with Anant Pattanaik's in recording the left-oriented 'progressive' poetry. Such volumes were *Abhijan* (The Expedition, 1938), and *Utha Jaga Voki Bandi* (Awake the Hungry and Imprisoned, 1943) and *Baji Rout* (Baji Rout, 1938 and 1943). Even in the titles of such poems like *Sramika Kabi* (The Labourer Poet), *Sarbahara* (The Proletariat), *Spen* (Spain), *Hatudi* (The Hammer), *Biplabar Janmadine* (On the Birth-day of Revolution), *Lal November* (The Red November), *Berlin* (Berlin), *Prabhat Pherir Gan* (The Song of the Morning Rally) the Marxist ideals, and references to Russian Revolution can be clearly seen. The best and the most well-known of this trend was *Baji Rout.* It was a long poem, in five sequences, and was written to celebrate the heroism of a young boat-man boy who chose to sacrifice his life in defiance during the ex-States' agitations for freedom, at Dhenkanal. The poem was written in a meditative -rhetorical language and in a symbolic structure to celebrate the undying human soul that triumphs over gloom and destruction to rise into a new life of universal hope and liberty. Thus the poem which begins with a proclamation- "No, it's not a funeral pyre/ It's an undying flame in darkness/ It's not to burn by itself/ But to burn others in a holocust" ends with an assurance. "He gives confidence in victory/ Hope in defeat/ He is not yours alone Oh, mother/ He

is the world's desire." In a way *Baji Rout* also combined both the aspects of Routray's early poetry, as also exultant rhetoric that characterized his early trends.

(*iii*)

Poetry was a much pursued form during the period. Apart from the major poets we have listed above, there were relatively less important poets who used to write in contemporary magazines, made name for the time being, though many of them took to other forms subsequently and some even completely gave up literary pursuits after a time. Yet the time was agog with poetry, poets and poetry-lovers. Generally the twin trends we have discussed above influenced most of the poets who wrote. The strongest was probably the influence of English Romantic poetry, and a frequent expression of romantic sensibility in poetry, the closest associate being Tagore from Bengal. Next to that was the Marxist influence, the spirit of revolution and the sympathy for the down-trodden. The first such poet who comes to mind was Annada Sankar Ray who subsequently migrated to Bengal, but who in Oriya wrote at least 2 popular poems, full of youthful exuberance and romantic spirit. The poems were *Pralaya Prerana* (An Urge for a Deluge) and *Srujan Swapna* (A Dream of Creation). Both the poems were similarly oriented, that is, to destroy the old and the existing, and to create a new world of dream, love and happiness. Thus he begins with a declaration- "I will break all shackles/ Scatter to pieces all obstructions/I will put all human-stains to a deluge of fire/ I will break all to pieces/ Raze everything to ground/ And throw all to distant oblivion." and ends with a soft romantic consolation- "I will run away/ There, to that distance/ To a dream land/ To a secret place/ Away from planets and stars/ To the banks of streaming youth/ Where the south wind blows always/Letting its flag of flowers fly."

Another poet who began with a fine perception of love and

nature, and who laterly migrated to prose and fiction, was Prana Krushna Samal (1912-1959). Two of his poems may be noted here. They were, *Hima Simantini* (The Mark of Cold) and *Sahee* (Woman-Friend). The poems deal with two parts of winter-early winter ('Hemanta') and later winter ('Sisira). The poems had a fine lyrical structure and mix accounts of winter-nature with perception of love. He addresses 'Hemanta' as a young youthful woman and of golden-coloured, and says- "Oh, give me a love-full heart/And grace/And a throat full of songs/ Keep away all your illusions/ And gray mist/Your golden colour I can see/In paddy fields/Shift your veil of dews/Let your forehead lie open/ And let me smoothen your tresses/ Spotted by *soma* flowers." But when 'Sisira' comes, the poet accosts her not as a young, youthful woman but as an adult woman, who though without certain graces, also brings certain others. Hence she is offered gifts and is welcome as bringing new life- "Let me decorate your tresses/ With fragrant, juicy mango-flowers/Let me hang a flowering ripe *tava* / At the tail end of your hair/ I feel everything new today/ It's different, oh my ancient one,/ The magic of mist vanishes/ And the elixir of life is sprinkled everywhere".

There were others too. For example, there was Aparna Devi (1899-1962) who was a considerable poet and story-teller on her own merit, and she expressed a fine mystical sensibility in her group of poems collected in the volume entitled *Satadala* (Hundred Petals) - "I move to drown my frail boat/ In that shapeless great sea/ Where eternal playful waves merge/ In an unending eternal shape.../ And where jingles of eternal life/ Merge in eternal figure/ And where eternal elixir drops / From eternal lotus-feet". Then there were Harischandra Badal (1904-1994), a senior Railways-administrator and a poet of the Sabuja Group, whose perception of nature was joined with a perception of love- "Oh my lady, the dawn has come/ Wake up,/ The cool wind touched slowly your scattered hair/ The dawn calls at the door/ Wake up,/ Please open

your eyes/ Graceful, heavy with sleep/ Like a new lotus,/ And pour your love on me/ Through petals of your eyes"; and Khitish Chandra Dey (1905-1972), who mostly wrote in the thirties, wrote appealingly of a quiet, tranquil life as against the noise and crowd of the towns and expressed a silent happiness at the coming of evening (*Pausa Sandhya*, Pausa Evening)- "The eyes of the day close slowly/ The shadows of gray twilight close in/ The screens of mist at the distant mountain-top/ Now create the illusions of a dream-land/ ...At the end of the day's work/ When all noise is quiet/ I am here in this land of peace/ And happiness fills my heart/ And all agonies vanish."; and Bhagaban Pati (1903-1984), who was felicitated as 'Basanta Kokila' (The Cuckoo of the Spring) for his lyricism, and who wrote of nature as providing happiness of love- dreams (*Sapana Sukha*) - "The rains today call at my door/ The *chakori* moans at the river bank/ Lo, in this rainy night/ I miss my companion/ And our eyes meet in dreams/ When *chakori* moans at the river bank/"...

Differently, we may also note the work of another poet in this connection, whose poems were reputed for their quality of lyricism, and were sung popularly far and wide. He was Krushna Mohan Pattanaik (1877-1940). Pattanaik was not exactly in the group of poets we have discussed above, or shared their poetic preoccupations. But he was also influenced by the pervasive romantic emotions and sensibility of the third and fourth decades. Thus innumerable poems that he wrote, and that were shaped as songs, had a trend towards imaginative feelings about nature, love, mysticism etc. A few examples would be pertinent. Thus this is how he speaks of sweet spring season- "Sweet union in this sweet month/ And sweet waves play around. / Sweetness in land and water/ Sweetness in the sky/ And sweetness in the ripples of wind floating around us." Or this is how he speaks of love- "I can't forget the fascination of those two eyes/ I was myself, she was herself/ Why did she look back ? Were her eyes like rain

streaming ?/ Were they among the stars ?/ Did they burn in autumn ?/ Or their fragrance wafted like flowers in the spring ?...."

Between the two trends, the second, that is, the influence of Bolshevik Revolution and the Marxist spirit, had its expression a little late, towards the end of the thirties, and continued throughout forties. We have seen how it influenced generally all the major poets, and particularly two, Sachi Routray and Anant Pattanaik, who in spite of a pervasive and strong romantic leaning in their early poetry, lent strong voices to this trend. Yet the trend also inspired many others as testified by a number of poems published in the contemporary journals, both by known and unknown poets. An interesting example was a poem published in *Nababharat* in 1939. It was entitled *Soshaka He Sabadhana* (O Suckers, be Careful), and was written by Jayakrushna Das, a physician by profession. It reads, "Oh, Capitalists, listen,/ The hungry is taking his procession today/ At the door of death. / Your delicate body lives on his blood/ And he sweats to provide you dreams/ In your luxurious houses/ ... Be warned, capitalists/ Be warned today/ Whomsoever you have razed under your feet/ Will blow your death-knell/ Your destruction is the solution/ Wake up/ Sing songs of equality with the hungry."

Two poets particularly may be noted in this connection, who became vocal in the forties, and even continued to be so after forties. They were Raghunath Das (1919-1984) and Manmohan Mishra (1920-2000). They both were members of the Communist Party and provided powerful expression to the leftist ideals. Initially Das was restless about the prevailing poetic environment and wanted to cut new directions towards a climate of liberty and equality. Thus when the Independence came he was not happy. On the other hand, he was aware of the dubious destiny of the Indians- "Oh travellers, be wary/ This is not the last step in your journey/ Your struggles are not yet over/ Even now the vultures circle above/ Greedy of people's blood and flesh/ And sweep at

labourer's life/ And your rice bowl will be shared by your master and the money-lender...". But gradually he crosses over his doubts and goes to a point of conviction when the forces of liberty and equality would be taking over :

They will come
Crossing over the Himalayas
Penetrating the Vindhyas
Innumerable front-runners
Of innumerable people,
Across the skies, across water
Through deep dense forests,
Riding over the sea-waves
Blasting thousands of prisons,

....

Singing song of liberty in every throat
Filling this gray earth in the richness of a dawn.

Mishra was equally restless about poor labourers and people who are always denied their due. One of his early poems shows sympathy for those who work for others but never get sufficient food for themselves- "You labour day and night/ Roast in fire/ Hunger has made your back and waist one/ You never get a day's holiday in a year/ The master's bread is full of ghee/ Your children die in hunger." Thus his clarion call to the proletariat- "Wake up proletariats/ Wake up quickly/ Break the prison walls/ Break them down/... Wake up, Wake up in freedom/ Leave darkness/ March towards light/ March like a comet.", and strong declaration that the people of India should be united to achieve their ends - a very popular song of Mishra :

Oh, the people of India
From factories, farms, mines
Unite, Unite,
In the fields of battle,
Oh, you males, females

The Hindus the Muslims
Your demands are the same
Rice, land, freedom,
Let there be hundred parties
Hundred institutions
Unite, Unite,
Oh, you people of India unite
In the fields of battle.

The spirit of nationalism has always been a strong motive force with the poets beginning from Radhanath Roy onwards, and it had its most vocal expression with the Satyabadi writers. It even continued to be so till Independence, only in the years before Independence it got linked with the intensity of freedom-struggle and with all its sequences of agitation and movement. As a result the nationalist motivation no longer became a subtle, implied spirit, but almost took new dimensions at par with the changing dimensions of freedom struggle. Two representative poets to be noted in this connection were Banchhanidhi Mohanty (1897-1938) and Bira Kishor Das (1896-1973), both of whom wrote substantial poetry, and enjoyed high public estimation. Most of Mohanty's poems were set to tuning and were frequently sung in public meetings. They were mostly related to freedom-struggle, freedom-fighters and to Gandhiji, showing anger, resentment, despair as well as sympathy, support and solidarity. Thus, this is how he wrote on an occasion when Orissa's leaders met in a Conference :

Tell me, tell me
Which nation has got freedom
By appealing, flattering and cajoling,
Tell me, who has ended his sorrow
And got happiness
By begging in the streets like beggars ?
If a tiger takes its pray
Does he leave it through whining and moanin

And does a fisherman leave the fishes
Unless the fishes get out of the net on their own ?
Look at the Irish, the Chinese, the Japanese
The Americans, the Afgan Pathans,
They got their freedom
When they did not care for life and death.

Almost similar motivations were also seen in the poems of Das, though in comparison to Mohanty he wrote more prolifically, with greater intensity of feeling, and had greater physical participation in the freedom-struggle. When Das's early poetry books, such as *Mohana Bansi* (The Fascinating Flute), *Bidrohi Veena* (The Rebel Lyre), *Rana Dunduvi* (The War Drum), *Rana Bheri* (The War Bugle) and *Mohana Benu* (Mohana's Flute) etc., were published in the twenties and thirties, they created a lot of stir and anger in the government circles. At least two books, *Rana Dunduvi* and *Rana Bheri* were proscribed, and for other books cases were started against him and he was repeatedly sentenced to imprisonment. But Birakishor's voice remained challengingly vibrant, inspired innumerable freedom-fighters, and he came to be recognized as a major nationalist poet and was honoured with the title 'Jatiya Kabi' (National Poet). Das's nationalistic spirit had many dimensions. At one level it was sharp and direct against the foreign Government- "It is a ruffian government/ A stupid government/ Its only job is to mix up violence with stupidity./ It has no rules and regulation/ It is whimsical and freakish/ Its intelligence has gone to dogs/ Only lies and flattery." Elsewhere he takes the battle-cry to the enemy's country - "We will see that they cry all over England/ Cry and whisper / We will let the white administration dance on its toes/ This way that way/... India is our diamond necklace/ We will not keep it on their neck any more/ We will snatch it away/ Snatch it away." Differently the poet gives a clarion call to his countrymen, particularly poets, not to write rubbish any more - "Oh, poet, stop writing rubbish/ Hold your

pen like a gun/ And blow once that new war-bugle/" At another level, the poet's voice is quiet but firm, and calls all to take a determined stand since the enemy has not retreated :

The enemy has not retreated
The war has not ended,
Oh brothers come
Come all to my camp,
Listen to the rumblings over the Himalayas
Don't fear
Don't delay...
The enemy has not retreated.
Worship your Goddess Oh, you devotees,
Pour all your red oleanders,
Whoever is young
Wake up,
Trample death under your feet
And rise from your slumber like a new god.

At the end it is the vision of a new life in new India :

That day is coming, not far off,
The world is getting ready
To crown Mother India.
Her Delhi throne is people's heart
Her peacock throne is equality
And her victory flag is nonviolence
Fluttering atop the Himalayas.

(iv)

In drama, the period from about 1920 till about 1950. was dominated by two considerable dramatists, both of whom, apart from writing dramas, were also intimately connected with the theatre and the direction and production of plays. They were Aswini Kumar Ghose (1892-1962) and Kali Charan Pattanaik (1898-1978). The former was from the village Bahugram, near

Cuttack city, and the latter, from Banki, at a distance of about 70 kms from Cuttack. Ghose's plays were mostly written and staged between 1920 and 1940, and Pattanaik's in the forties, and both were immensely popular with their audiences.

Aswini Kumar's father, Akhaya Kumar Ghose, was an affluent publisher of Oriya books, and his two uncles were illustrious Oriya writers, Gaurisankar Roy and Ramasakar Roy. From all three Aswini Kumar imbibed a strong love for Oriya literature, and particularly Oriya drama on the one hand, and a nationalistic spirit and a free, independent mind on the other. Ghose's involvement with theatre was almost a total involvement, and for about 15 years, till 1935 he was intimately associated, first with Banamali Pati's 'Radhakrushna Theatre' and secondly with its continuation 'Banamali Art Theatre' which he himself had purchased and ran. Both the theatres staged his plays all over Orissa and even outside Orissa. Ghose migrated to Calcutta in 1936, where he stayed till his death. He wrote about 35 plays in an overall three categories, mythological, historical and social. While he hinted upon social problems and suggested solutions in his social plays, he advocated national integration in the mythological plays, and an aggressive patriotism in the historical plays.

Earlier Godabaris Mishra, the Satyabadi poet, had two historical dramas, *Purusottam Dev* and *Mukunda Dev* that were based on two illustrious kings of Orissa, and in both war, conflict, death, bravery, cowardice and treachery etc. joined together as dramatic elements. But both the plays had introduced one new element that was not so clear in Oriya dramas before - a strong patriotic dimension particularly as related to Orissa, though that had been often expressed already as a strong motive in other forms such as poetry, novel, essays etc. With Godabaris's Satyabadi background it was natural for him to do so. But the audience was also motivated by nationalist feelings, and they wanted an orientation towards such plays, be it mythological or historical.

Aswini Kumar took up Godabaris's lead, and one of strongest motivations in his plays was the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. His first play, a mythological, entitled *Bhisma* was staged with great success in 1915, and two years later, *Savitri,* his second mythological. In the context of mythology, both the plays had clear, easy structure, and what impressed the audience was an emphasis on elements of idealism and sacrifice.

Afterwards it was a heady progress. From 1918 till 1927, in 10 years, he produced 7 historical plays and that too, 2 in 1922 and 3 in 1927. It was more so in the thirties. From 1933 till 1942, till the advent of Kalicharan Pattanaik on the stage, he had 13 plays in 10 years, 5 in 1933 and 4 in 1937, in all categories, mythological 5, historical 4, and social 4. Even after 1942 till 1946, as if in competition with Kalicharan, he wrote 5 plays, 2 mythological, 3 social. Even after Independence the tempo continued. But it was mostly a tailing-off period, and the dramas lacked the power and the impact which they had before Independence.

Aswini Kumar's mythological plays had different sources. First of all, it was mythology as such, as was the cases with *Bhisma* and *Savitri.* Secondly, it was local legends, for example, the well-known legend on the construction of Lord Jagannath's temple at Puri (*Sri Mandir,* 1934, also staged in Bengali translation as *Puri Temple* at the Star Theatre in Calcutta). Thirdly, literary sources-*Chandaluni* (1946), based on the 16th century poet Balaram Das's popular Kavya *Laxmi Purana;* and *Salbeg* (1933), *Dasia Bauri* (1933), *Tyagi Ramdas* (1933), *Raghu Arakhhita* (1937) and *Bandhu Mohanty* (1944), all based on *Dardyata Bhakti Rasamruta,* a popular fictional verse-biography of Oriya saints by Bipra Rama Das of 18th century. The mythological plays had a number of episodes within the total frame, and the characterisation and the plot-sequences had a tendency to socialize the mythology, that is, they tended to develop reasonableness in attitudes and real life

situations. Thus *Chandaluni* struck against untouchability, and plays like *Dasia Bauri* and *Salbeg* etc. against discrimination through caste and religion. The plays had a strong devotional element too, particularly the plays based on the lives of saints, and they tended to project such ideal aspects of character as the spirit of sacrifice and truthfulness and religiousness in men.

The historical plays had also divergent sources. First, it was *Seoji* (1918), from the Rajput history, the purpose being to establish the heroism of Rajput nation. Secondly, it was from Orissa's history, as in *Kalapahad* (1922), the purpose being to show the internal conflict of Kalapahad, the cruel Muslim invader of Orissa (a converted Muslim, who is said to have done the greatest damage to Orissan temples, including the damage to Lord Jagannath), in the mid-16th century, and the strong spirit of Oriya nationalism of King Mukunda Dev, who got defeated and killed; or, as in *Kesari Ganga* (1927), the story of the 12th century Oriya princess Nandikakesari, who in a bid to avoid war and carnage, sacrificed her life. Then there were both literary and local sources, such as *Odia Jhia* (Oriya Daughter, 1935), based on a novel entitled *Balangi* by Chakradhar Mahapatra, related to some historical episodes of Narasinghapur, an ex-State area; and *Bhanjabhujanga* (1936), the account related to the history of the royal family of Nilgiri, near Balasore. Then there was *Konark* (1927) (a la Gopabandhu Das's long narrative poem *Dharmapada,* related to the constuction of Konark temple) based on a legend related to the construction of Konark temple, and the emphasis was on spirit of sacrifice and idealism, A few aspects of Aswini Kumar's historical plays may be noted in this connection. First, he did not have much commitment to history. He invariably took a historical frame, but often filled that up with imaginary situations and episodes, the purpose was not so much as to contemporanize history or to humanize the characters, both of which he ably did, but to create a sense of contemporaneity in the historical (and

mythological) plays. This is not to recreate the contemporary social life, but to take up a few trends of contemporary situation and to focus them through historical or mythological sequences, such as the spirit of nationalism, or the spirit of sacrifice, service, liberality and universality. All that raised Aswini Kumar's dramas, as has been said, to a level of idealism.

These attitudes we can also see in his social plays. These plays began late, from 1937 onwards, and by 1946 he had 8 such plays. The first was *Hindu Ramani* (The Hindu Woman, 1937) that showed the disintegration of a Zamindar's family and the truthfulness, honesty and the strength of will of women that saved it. The second play *Master Babu,* also written in 1937, continued similar approach and showed the spirit of service and sacrifice of Hindu women that saved the desultory life of permissive men. Even differently, the two social plays that he wrote in 1946, *Sri Lokanath* and *Chasa Jhia* (The Farmer's Daughter), both of which dealt with the changing social life in rural areas, the emphasis was again on truthfulness and service and how that finally triumphed over disarray and discord in the family life. In fact Aswini Kumar's social plays took up such themes as faithfulness and sacrifice of Hindu women, the discord as well as amity among brothers, the marital peace and happiness, the community cohesiveness and intimacy, and negative aspects of Western education, as well as universal brotherhood and Gandhian ideals as applied to family and social life. On the whole, the plays of Aswini Kumar were so many expressions of an idealistic, imaginative mind motivated towards an intense Oriya nationalism and a liberal society. The third and fourth decades of the 20th century were times of change all over India - changes in political, social and cultural areas. Aswini Kumar's creative talent responded to the change and his plays reflected the trends of change successfully and meaningfully.

Kalicharan Pattanaik's dramatic career also began around 1918, and he wrote a total of about 40 plays, most of which were

written before Independence. His plays had a general phasing. From 1918 till about 1940, he wrote plays and Leelas based on mythological themes, such as *Dhruba* (1918), *Sakuntala* (1923) and *Harischandra* (1923) etc. all mythological plays, and *Banabihar* (Play in the Garden, 1926), *Bidyavali* (1923), *Geeta Govinda* (1936) , *Preeti Sudhakar* (The Moon of Love, 1937) and *Manini* (The Sulking Lady, 1938) etc., all Leelas, depicting the dalliances of Radha and Krushna. But after 1940 the trends of his writing changed. Instead of Leelas he started writing plays for the theatre which he himself had organized at Cuttack, under the name of 'Orissa Theatres', and the mythological themes were supplanted by themes taken from the contemporary society. Even before that, in 1934 and 1935 he had written two social plays, entitled *Pratisodh* (Revenge) and *Ahuti* (Sacrifice) respectively. The former expressed the playwright's resentment against the social system of old men marrying young brides, and the latter against the contemporary caste-distinction through the unsuccessful love between two young people.

But Kalicharan's real debut was his play *Girl School* staged in 1942, in his own stage. Its background was famous Ravenshaw Girls' School, the only school for girls at Cuttack at that time. Its theme relates to the love of two young people, their separation, union, and final marriage. But it had other dimensions too, such as plans for village reconstruction and the spread of Gandhian ideals, the ill aspects of Western education, and the belief that true love is more than lustful advances. His second play was staged in the same year and in the same theatre. It was named *Chumban* (Kiss), and the name shocked the conservative minds. But like the earlier play it also dealt with the emotions of young love, separation and final union. Not that the themes carried much newness, but the language, presentation, on the whole the exposition with women-artists and music etc. was completely new. The plays were highly successful on the stage, and established Kalicharan as a major dramatist.

His next important play *Bhata* (Rice) staged in 1944, added further to his reputation. It became more successful than the earlier two, and ran continuously for more than 100 packed nights at Cuttack. Its theme was social like the earlier ones - young love, complication in love, and finally marriage. It had other aspects too, such as, the scarcity of food due to Second World War and the environment of famine, and the conflict between the haves and the have-nots. Besides, in comparison to the earlier two, the organization was more sophisticated, more disciplined, had greater liaison with the details of village life, and had elements of humour on the one hand and plenty of songs on the other - a group of memorable songs that became extremely popular as such at the time. They were songs of love as well as songs related to contemporary famine conditions, and they communicated intense emotion, in impeccable structure of rhyme and rhythm. One such song entitled, 'The day has ended' is as follows- "The sun touches the bottom of the wall/It mixes smiles and laughter/ The lamp does not burn in somebody's house/ Somebody does not get rice particles to eat/ It's dark somewhere/ Tears stream from eyes/ The mother takes food from the child's mouth and eats/ And somebody celebrates the festival of light...". After *Bhata,* were *Banamala* (The Garland of the Forest, 1944), *Bekar* (Unemployed, 1945), *Haranchal* (Abducted, 1946) and *Raktamati* (The Bloody Earth, 1947). A few year later after Independence, he also wrote some more social plays. In all these plays (except *Hirakhand,* 1968) love was the main structural element, that is, the same circle of love, union, separation and marriage. But everywhere there were suggestions of different social problems - in *Banamala* the problems of an aristocratic family, in *Bekar* the problem of unemployment and its solution through agriculture and industry, and in *Raktamati* the class conflict and the relationship between the capitalist and the labour.

Kalicharan's mythological plays were largest in number,

about 20, and he not only wrote those plays, more or less continuously between 1918 and 1940, even after that, till his death, he off and on wrote plays, such as *Dasabhuja* (1947), *Ananga* (1949) and *Sudama* etc. From one point of view this was the continuation of a popular tradition that had begun from Ramasankar onwards, a tradition of mythological plays. On the other hand, it was a part of an extremely popular tradition of folk-drama that included plays, Leelas and Jatras etc. all based on mythological themes and sequences. In addition, Kalicharan's historical plays would number about 10, and social plays about 14. But this categorisation of his plays would not be exclusive of each other. They often had a mixing up of different approaches and attitudes. Thus in *Jayadev* (1943) history and legend have got mixed up, and the attitude is one of strong spirit of nationalism. Similar was the case with *Atibadi Jagannath Das* (1947) and even with *Sarala Das* (1954). A similar approach could be seen with social plays too. Thus in *Raktamati* social issues have merged with political issues, and in *Phatabhuin* (Broken Earth, 1948) changes in history got merged with political changes and spirit of nationalism. Even in a 1950 play, entitled *Jugajogi* (The Yogi of the Times) mythology, history, political consciousness, philosophy and idealism - all have joined up as one unit. In this connection *Abhijana* (The Invasion) which is probably the best play of Kalicharan, can be discussed to some extent.

Abhijana was written and staged in 1946, on the eve of Independence. Its main characters were historical persons, but the story was based on a legend, and in attitude it had a strong spirit of nationalism, related to the pride and glory of Orissa. The historical part relates to later 15th century Orissa and to King Purusottam Dev's battles with the King of Kanchi and his marriage to the latter's daughter, and the legend how Purusottam received the divine aid from Lord Jagannath and Balavadra. There had been earlier dramas based on this story such as, Ramsankar Roy's *Kanchi*

Kavery (1880), Godabaris Mishra's *Purusottam Dev* (1917), and Bhikari Charan Pattanaik's *Raja Purusottam* (1925). Even much earlier, there was the 17th century Oriya Kavya *Kanchi Kavery* by Purusottam Das. When compared with the earlier works *Abhijana's* difference becomes immediately apparent. This difference is in organisation, in exposition, in the point of view, and also in motivation. Particularly, in clarity, naturalness and contemporaneity, a religion-linked legend has come down to an easy, day to day level of life, which was not available before, and became part of the emotions and understanding of the audience. Love is an important structural element in *Abhijana* - the invisible links of love between Purusottam and Padmabati, the Kanchi King's daughter. Then there are other equally important elements, such as, a strong spirit of Oriya nationalism, and an intense devotion for Lord Jagannath. All these provided a great viability and easy naturalness to *Abhijana.*

This was an aspect which we had seen in earlier plays too such as *Girl School, Chumban* and *Bhata,* and because of which *Abhijana* could come out of the imposed limitations of a drama and could be one with the perception of the readers (or spectators), like any contemporary fiction or story. The best example of this in *Abhijana* is its use of language or dialogue. Its variety and naturalness have brought a corresponding variety, beauty and naturalness in the organisation of the play. Two examples may be cited. One is in Act-I, Scene-V, before Lord Jagannath inside the temple. In devotion, excitement and awareness of a miracle the language is tense with emotion, but nevertheless simple, precise, and just a grouping of interrogatives :

Maya- (enters, with folded hands) Oh Lord ! The Lord of all Chandals ! What do I see ? Padmabati's garland in Chandal's neck ? Is it your order ? Your desire ? Who says the God never speaks ? Who says the God is dumb ? Who says the God is dead in Kali ? (she prostrated herself and

found the King's diamond ring) Lord, Lord ! Is it your blessing ? Your directive ? Your command ? Oh Lord !

The second is from Act-I, Scene-VII, showing Purusottam Dev's recollections. The expression is full of emotion, but the language is not precise. It rolls lengtheningly, in slow measure, like not wishing to give up a thing you like, and not as in the earlier example where the speaker merged with the situation, here the excitement and anxiety are controlled, and the attitude is to see from a distance and assess, like an impartial royal consideration :

Purusottam- The graceful deer plays in the sands near Kavery. In restless playfulness it ripples the vast beaches of Kavery ...In the spring evening, the setting sun's red colour cools its body under the dark waters of Kavery... The sight suddenly drew my eyes to the palace on the other side of Kavery. And then... ?

In Kalicharan's plays we find many virtues. First, he freed the drama's language from the earlier artificiality. Secondly, the imaginative-spread of his dramas is large. Thirdly, he expressed the contemporary themes and problems in contemporary organization. And lastly, he took it for granted that the dramas should be a viable source of entertainment. Thus he brought in actresses, introduced songs, put in humour and light scenes etc. On the whole it can be said that Kalicharan shaped his dramas such a way, both structurally and linguistically, that they developed a responsible and responsive form which catered satisfactorily to the new taste of the time, and established him as the first important dramatist of the modern times.

As has been said, both Aswini Kumar and Kalicharan were dominant playwrights in the period before Independence, that is, in the twenties, thirties and forties. But there were also other playwrights who conformed to the prevailing mode and wrote fairly good dramas. Such plays were, Krupasindhu Pattadeb's *Mahuri*

Patan (The Fall of Mahuri, 1923) based on history and legend; Bhagirathi Mahapatra's mythological plays, *Sita Banabas* (Sita's Banishment, 1928), *Bhaktamoni* (The Jewel of Devotees, 1929) and *Pravas Milan* (The Union at Pravas, 1931); Laxmikant Mahapatra's mythological Leelas, *Sarad Rasa* (1923), *Basant Vilas*, and *Varuna Bijaya;* Ramchandra Mahapatra's mythological plays *Bilwamangal* (1929) and *Raghu Arakhita* (1934); Mayadhar Mansingh's *Pujarini* (The Woman-Devotee, 1932) on love, and *Nastaneeda* (The Broken Nest, 1938), a social play; Bijoy Kumar Singhdeo's historical play *Aviram Singh* (1929); Chudamoni Nayak's mythological play *Kartabirjya* (1931) and historical play *Kalinga Simha* (The Lion of Kalinga, 1938); Ramaranjan Mohanty's historical play *Gauda Bijeta* (The Victors of Gauda, 1925); Harischandra Badal's nationalistic play *Desara Daka* (The Call of the Country, 1932); Baikunthanath Pattanaik's social play *Muktipathe* (On the Way of Freedom, 1933); Kalindi Charan Panigrahi's historical play *Priyadarsi* (1933); Durgamadhab Prasad Singhdeo's historical play *Jyostna Bai* (1933); Anant Prasad Panda's historical play *Tara Bai* (1932), and mythological play *Tulasi* (1938); Simadri Pattanaik's historical plays *Pruthwiraj* (1920) and *Birasri Ananga Bhima Dev* (1929); Dhaneswar Das's historical play *Kharavela* (1932); Lala Nagendra Kumar Roy's mythological play *Raghu Arakhita* (1928) and historical plays, *Kalinga Vijaya* (The Victory Over Kalinga, 1926) and *Sesha Swadhinata* (The Last Independence, 1931); and Kaliprasanna Kabi's historical drama *Aviram Singh* (1929).

(*v*)

We have seen how Phakirmohan dominated the field of novel-writing at the turn of the century. His novels were few, yet the way he analysed social situations and exposed the changing social mores and at the same time took care to organize the structure of the novel as a viable unit of entertainment as well as of reform

and awareness, acted as a potent influence for many others who wrote after him. This was more or less the case till about 1920. But after 1920, though Phakirmohan remained as the brightest star in the firmament, and though following him social issues and complications of social change continued to draw the largest attention of the novelists, Phakirmohan's influence waned and the novelists struck out meaningful departures, and took to new ways of exposition and analysis. It has been noted how the number of novels published between 1920 and 1947 increased phenomenally when the number jumped to more than 250 as against about 20 before 1920, and increased in frequency as the period approached towards Independence.

The rising interest of the reading public, particularly for the novel, must have been an important reason for this. At the same time, what some contemporary journals and institutions did by way of planning towards this end has also to be noted. In 1923, *Mukura* edited by Brajasundar Das, launched a series of publications called 'Mukura Upanyasmala' (Mukur Novel Series). The purpose was to publish a novel a month at an affordable price to the readers. Already in 1920, Balakrushna Kar, the editor of *Sahakar*, had launched 'Anand Lahari Upanyasmala' or 'Saraswata Upanyasmala' (Saraswata Novel Series) and had planned to publish at least 6 novels a year. Then there were projects independent of journals, such as 'Banibinod Granthamala' (Banibinod Books) and Krushna Chandra Pradhan's 'Sulav Upanyasmala' (Cheap Novel Series). Also literary organizations took steps to publish novels. They were Sabuja Sahitya Samiti and Oriya Prachar Sangha. The total impact on the reading public was substantial. With the increase in the number of educational institutions, rise in urban population and better opportunities of employment, along with the availability of leisure-time on the one hand, and on the other, external influences such as factors arising out of freedom struggle, and the spread of new ideologies from abroad, the alert and conscious

generations of the twenties, thirties and forties took to novel-writing and reading in a large way.

Theme-wise the novels can be grouped into different categories. A large number of them can be called social novels, that is, they dealt with contemporary social situations, issues and attitudes with an exposition of social change, and with an orientation at times, towards socio-political reality. Then there was the spirit of nationalism, both in Indian and Orissan context, linked with social factors, but with main orientation towards the former. Then there were historical novels, that dealt with one or other aspect, or event, or even important personalities of the past, almost always linked with a spirit of nationalism and patriotism, preferably in an Orissan context. Then there were novels of crime and detection; local adaptations of foreign classics; and novels dealing with the intensity of young adolescent love. Attitude-wise, too, some interesting aspects may be noted. Thus there used to be emphasis on good manners, virtue and character, and a premium on suffering because of these. Then both the elements of happiness and unhappiness could be seen mixed up in the development of the story and human relationship, with the greater emphasis on the latter. Similarly, the writers appeared to be more fascinated by the women-characters with the distinct emphasis on female-identity and on woman's mental complications. On the whole, the attitudes ranged from emotional involvement to impartial documentation and analysis, and though it was difficult on the part of these writers to attain the excellence of Phakirmohan, yet novel as a genre before Independence could to a large extent acquire viability, popularity and distinction all of which were much needed for this new form. And the writers belonged to all age-groups - senior writers who had been known and established before 1920, but had their novels published during this period; the writers, and their number was largest, who began their literary careers by 1920 or a little before that, but came to be established during this period; and such other

writers who had their first innings during this period, but came to prominence after Independence.

It would be appropriate first, to note relatively more important writers and their novels. The following is a select-list of the same - Nandakishor Bal (*Kanaklata,* 1925), Chintamoni Mohanty (*Tankagachha,* Money Tree, 1920; *Jugalamatha,* The Twin Monastery, 1924; *Bula Phakira,* The Roving Mendicant, 1924; *Sanisapta,* The Evil Look, 1933), Godabaris Mishra (*Avagini,* The Unfortunate, adaptation of Victor Hugo's *Les Miserable*, 1922; *1817,* adaptation of Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, 1932), Sm. Kuntala Kumari Sabat (*Bhranti,* The Mistake, 1923; *Natundi,* The Quarrelsome Woman, 1925; *Kalibohu,* The Dark Lady, 1925; *Raghu Arakhita,* 1928; *Parasamoni,* The Touchstone, 1933), Laxmikant Mahapatra (*Kana Mamu,* The One-Eyed Uncle, 1937), Kalindi Charan Panigrahi (*Matira Manisha,* The Man of the Soil, 1931; *Muktagadar Khyuda,* The Hunger of Muktagada, 1933), Dayanidhi Mishra (*Sanjukta,* Sanjukta, 1921; *Manabhanjan,* Allaying One's Huff, 1924; *Suvadra,* Suvadra, 1927), Ramachandra Acharya (*Birangana,* Heroic Woman, on Ahallya Bai, 1924; *Bira Odia,* The Brave Oriyas, historical novel related to early 18th century, 1925; *Padmini,* Padmini, historical novel, 1929), Godabaris Mahapatra (*Rajdrohi,* The Traitor, 1925 and *Bandira Maya,* The Magic of the Prisoner, both historical novels related to the 17th and 18th century Orissa; *Premapathe,* In the Path of Love, 1932; *Bidroha,* Protest, 1938), Dibyasingh Panigrahi (*Tu Mo Ma,* You My Mother, 1932), Baishnab Charan Das (*Manemane,* Secretly in Their Minds, 1926), Harish Chandra Baral (*Prabas, Pranaya, Pramoda,* Foreign Land, the Love, the Lady, 1934; *Chithira Jabab,* Reply to the Letter, 1938), Chakradhar Mahapatra (*Gobara Gotei,* the Fag-Gatherer, 1930; *Rana-Madhuri,* Rana and Maduri, 1934; *Balangi,* Balangi, historical novel related to 17th/18th century Orissa, 1934) Biramitra Singh Deo (*Bhagna Kankan,* The Broken Bangles, 1920; *Nilakuntala.* Of Blue Tresses,

1928), Govinda Tripathy (*Pramad,* Mistake, 1925; *Patitar Atmakatha,* The Story of a Fallen Woman 1930 etc.), Upendra Kishor Das (*Malajanha,* The Dead Moon, 1928), Ram Prasad Singh (*Agnipathe,* In the Path of Fire, 1936; *Homasikha,* The Fire of Oblation, 1937; *Marichika,* The Mirage, 1947 etc.), Chadramoni Das (*Bhul Kahar*, Whose Fault, 1938; *Rajanigandha,* The Jasmine, 1939; *Anathasrama,* The Orphanage, 1940; *Narabali,* Human Sacrifice, 1942 etc.), Kamalakant Das (*Bou,* Mother, 1926; *Bhaujabou,* Sister-in-law, 1939; *Jiban Sauda,* Life's Bargain, 1943; *24 No. Cabin,* 1944 etc.), Anant Prasad Panda (*Bhagyachakra,* The Circle of Fate, 1928; *Kuli,* Coolie, 1942 etc.), Pranakrushna Samal (*Neelakamal,* Blue Lotus, 1939; *Hatika Dant,* Elephant's Teeth, 1947), Batakrushna Praharaj (*Matamatha,* 1946), Kanhu Charan Mohanty (*Baliraja,* The King of Bali, adaptation of Dumas's *Count of Montecresto*, 1931; *Swapna na Satya* Dream or Reality, 1933; *Ha Anna,* Alas ! Food, 1935; *Adekha Hata,* Unseen Hand, 1943; *Sasti,* Punishment, 1946, etc., a total of 17 novels between 1930 and 1947, all social novels), Md. Abdul Rahim (*Swarnalata,* Swarnalata, 1921; *Sukumari,* Sukumari, 1928; *Padmabati,* Padmabati, 1932, *Padmarekha,* 1938 etc.), Laxmidhar Nayak (*Bhulila Sate Sakhi.* How You Forget Me, My Dear, 1934; *Barsara Sesha,* The End of the Rains, 1945; *Sarbahara,* The Proletariat, 1947 etc.), Gopinath Mohanty (*Mana Gahirar Chasa,* Tilling the Mind's Depth, 1940; *Dadibudha,* The Ancient, 1944), Nityananda Mahapatra (*Bhul,* Mistake, 1945; *Jibanar Lakhya,* The Aim of Life, 1946 etc.), Rajkishor Pattanaik (*Sindura Gara,* The Vermillion Paint, 1943; *Panjuri Pakhi,* The Bird in the Cage, 1946 etc.), Harekrushna Mahatab (*Nutan Dharma,* New Religion, 1935; *Abyapar,* Chaos, 1947), Jnanindra Burma (*Satabdhira Swapnabhanga,* The Waking of the Century, 1944; *Bhumika,* Introduction, 1945), and a single novel entitled *Basanti* written by 9 writers, (1931).

A few novels that provide a representative cross-section of

the variations from Phakirmohan tradition may be specially noted at this point. They are *Manemane, Malajanha, Basanti, Matira Manisha, Ha Anna, Homasikha, Kanamamu* and *Dadibudha. Manemane* by Baishnab Charan Das deals with intense feelings of love between two young people. The relationship grew from childhood days, and came to be fully realized and established at an youthful age when familial factors intervened to separate them. The young woman was given in marriage at a separate place and the youngman was constrained to accept social limitations and ethics. But the feelings of love between them, for each other, never lessened. Only what had an outward aspect, got bottled up inside, and burnt furiously in the inward recesses of the mind. Hence the title of the novel. The end was tragic - the lady killed herself, and the frame of the story was woven with potential happiness and reality unhappiness. The dimensions of social change that Phakirmohan portrayed, or his emphasis on sequences of story, action and narration, were replaced by the psychological complications of the protagonists, and the young woman's attempts to establish her viability on the face of adverse social situations. Though language, as in Phakirmohan, remained colloquial and racy, yet his wit, humour and implied irony gave place to a lineal, simpler structure of emotional intensity. But *Manemane* measured up to the contemporary taste of the reading public and was reckoned as a very successful novel.

Malajanha by Upendra Kishor Das similarly also dealt with the feelings of love between two young persons, and the attempts to establish the woman's identity. But the lines are sharper, the feelings of love more focused, and the woman's identity is more forcefully expressed, almost to the point of aggressiveness. The location was largely village-environment, and the love, as in *Manemane,* grew from childhood association, and was a strong cementing factor even from the beginning. Then again, as in *Manemane,* the familial factors intervened and the lady was given

in marriage at a separate place. That was the turning point in both the novels. But whereas in *Manemane* the post-marriage environment was one of convenience and cogeniality, because of which the pre-marital feelings of love remained controlled and concealed in the mind, it was in *Malajanha* one of absolute uncongeniality and horror. As a result, the lady had to leave her husband's place, undergo a lot of hardship, and had to stay with the man she loved on the face of extremely adverse social situation. The end was, as in the earlier novel, tragic; but unlike the former, it came as the logical conclusion of what had gone before.

We have noted how the elements of happiness and unhappiness provided a mixed colour to the structure of *Manemane*. But it is one of continuing unhappiness in *Malajanha*, a grim picture throughout, and whatever softness was there, only external, seen in the running frame of the fascinating picture of rural graces and rural nature. The two adversaries, the individual and the society, one kicking to be free, and the other trying to bound it as stiffly as it can, are poised against each other in clear terms. Thus the lady's resentment ("I felt the women as a whole are most unlucky, most contemptible. When we walk in the youth's slippery ground, as if the whole society, with its thousand eyes, prays on us, watching for the slightest trembling of legs. If caught red-handed, that's the end. All at once it's the death penalty. But men ? No, they are different. They are not like us."), and the society's contempt ("Look here, if you don't comply with us, I tell you frankly, we will excommunicate you. No fire, no water, no washerman, no barber. Remember, nobody will come to your house for anything. No worship, no function. Not only we in this village, but none in the surrounding villages too, will as much touch your threshold."), and the end is a long moaning, ("Yes, I'm leaving. I don't know where. But I know I have to go. That's the only thing I'm to do. It's quiet, silent... The night is so lonely. I have nothing to beg from anybody, no complain against anybody. This house so

familiar, every brick I know, each particle of dust of the quadrangle I know, I take my leave from all of them for life... Please don't remember I was there, and my name was Sati..."). Both *Manemane* and *Malajanha* were new novels in the twenties. They effected new understanding, prodded the social instinct, and almost like Phakirmohan, both exposed and castigated the human manners, morals and relationship.

Basanti was published in 1931 by Sabuja Sahitya Samiti, but it was serialized earlier in *Utkal Sahitya* in the years 1926 and 1927. The book had 30 chapters and was written by 9 authors, such as Sm. Sarala Devi (9 chapters), Kalindi Charan Panigrahi (5 chapters), Sarat Chandra Mukharjee (4 chapters), Annada Sankar Roy (3 chapters), and Harihar Mahapatra, Sm. Suprava Devi, Muralidhar Mohanty, Baishnab Charan Das, each 2 chapters, and Sm. Prativa Devi, one chapter. The plot outline was announced earlier, and the subsequent co-ordination and editing were done respectively by Annada Sankar Roy and Sarat Chandra Mukharjee. In view of 9 authors the chapters had stylistic variations. But it should be noted to the credit of the book that such variations were kept to the minimum, and the story sequences as well as thematic developments showed a pleasant consistency and compactness. The main part of the story relates, as in earlier *Manemane* and *Malajanha* to love-relationship between two young people. But whereas in *Manemane* it was stunted from the beginning and ended tragically, and in *Malajanha,* though not stunted, yet grew through heavily strained situation and also ended tragically, in *Basanti,* it began naturally, in strength, also grew in strength, and though had to undergo severe strains, ended happily. *Basanti* had both urban and rural environment. The youngman Debabrata and the young lady Basanti, both living in Cuttack, got attracted to each other, got married on the face of his mother's stiff opposition, and shifted to his country-home, where troubles started, social factors got in, and the relationship between Debabrata and Basanti got strained

to the extent she had to leave home, driven away by him. The rest led to a change - the suffering, repentance and reunion. In fact, in all the three novels the society was a big factor - the social taboos and restrictions and their continuing clash with the individual identities. In *Manemane* the protagonists had to bow down before the iron-frame and dictates of the society; in *Malajanha* they tried to challenge all that, thought they would somehow get away, but finally failed; in *Basanti* they ignored the society and its hostility, kept it at bay, and though they had to tolerate its stings to their great owe, yet they finally triumphed and could bring the society under their subjugation and establish their identities. Equally, another important dimension in all the three novels was the relevance of woman's identity and how best it can be established. In all three the emphasis has been put on women-characters, Kanaka in *Manemane,* Sati in *Malajanha* and Basanti in *Basanti.* But in *Manemane*, the woman's identity was a matter of speculation and was resolved only in death. In *Malajanha* it was vocal, and active, yet it could not sustain itself. It was only in *Basanti,* the woman's identity was fully established and remained alert in ideas and action. Basanti was the representative of the new woman in the twenties, woman of vision and strength, who could take her stand against adverse social situation - the type of women who emerged under the changed socio-political conditions of the twenties. (Incidentally, Sarala Devi, who wrote maximum number of chapters - nine, was socio-politically, a very much involved young woman at the time.) Thus this is how Basanti reacts when asked about the woman's role in the society - "Whatever you may say as ideal and traditional, I can't support them. Because to have an ideal society you need perfect co-ordination between men and women. None of them should have dominance over the other. They should be like twin sons." And again elsewhere - "Extremist ? Yes, I am that, whatever my intelligence and conscience accept as ideal I stick by that. I can't compromise in between because the

society threatens me. Yes, I am a radical individualist."

Matira Manisha by Kalindi Charan Panigrahi was a highly acclaimed book, and remained as a popular text book in the schools and colleges for many years. Apart from its uniquness in comparison to other novels of Panigrahi, it also constituted a significant distinction in the growth of Oriya novel since Phakirmohan. The book had a number of credible aspects. First, it did not switch places between the town and the village as found in many contemporary novels, but remained completely rooted to the village. Secondly, the village was seen not just as an environment, but as a living unit - a living, throbbing organism that moves around with both health and disease. Thirdly, though the society provides the context, the novel does not discuss social issues as such, such as caste problems, superstitions, torture of women etc., but deals with the society in change, a change towards nuclear family and towards a self-motivated existence. Fourthly, it provided an intense awareness about people in the lower rungs of the society, who till the land and work hard in their fields, and yet remain as the deprived majority and easy prey to motivated people. Lastly, the novel incorporated Gandhian ideals and Gandhiji's views of life - a good testimony of Gandhiji's potential influence on contemporary creative minds.

The story outline of *Matira Manisha* is simple. It relates to two brothers and their families in a remote village in Cuttack district. It was an average farmer's family, and they tilled their land and lived in comparative understanding with each other. Particularly the elder brother Baraju was a man of head and heart who shouldered the entire responsibility of the family, and was like a father-figure not only to his younger brother, but also to many other people in the village. But this situation did not last long. Discordant elements promoted by motivated people in the village got in, and as a result the joint-family of two brothers was broken up. Of course, Baraju, did not permit it to be so. He left the

entire property to his younger brother and left the village. As can be seen, the story points out an important social factor of the times, that is, to what extent the agricultural joint-families were breaking up (an accepted fact now) and fissiparous, self-motivated discordant elements were penetrating into so far largely cohesive and compact agricultural communities and conditions of living. This was the basic factor of the novel's structure, and Baraju's character given to morals, ethics and high Gandhian idealism was a serious attempt to stem, if possible, the factors of social disintegration that had set in. Then there are other credible considerations, such as the novel's colloquial language and colloquial graces, and its continual throw-back in the structure to folk-wisdom seen in the use of proverbs, saws and sayings. *Matira Manisha* is an interesting mix of macrocosm with microcosm, of specificity with universal, and the writer's awareness to that effect is evident even in the first paragraph of the book - "Like our old, familiar sun, billions of sun rise and set in this universe daily. Round each sun billions of planets and satellites whirl around and create days, nights, seasons, months and years. Among them a very small planet is our ancient mother-earth. Inside that Bharatavarsha is a small country. Inside that Orissa. And inside that Padhanpada in the Cuttak district, on the river Birupa - a very small habitation of absolutely negligible human beings. Sam Pradhan's little hut is in that village. What is its place in the vast universe - an atom or a molecule who will say." *Matira Manisha* is a significant book, a significant link between the great novels of Phakirmohan on the one hand and *Matimatala* (1964), the great epic novel of Gopinath Mohanty on the other.

Matira Manisha was a reflection of the times and portrayed the essential moral fabric of the socio-political agitation led by Gandhiji. *Ha Anna,* by Kanhu Charan Mohanty too, drew the attention of readers to grim social realities, but that of a different time, of the realities of the devastating famine of 1866, popularly

known as 'Na-anka'. In fact the famine was the dominant motive-force in an otherwise simple story of human relationship in a village, particularly the growing love-relationship between a youngman and a young woman. The famine debased human character, and showed man's negative characteristics in sharp focus. First, the writer goes to the genesis of 1866 famine - "The year was 1817. Innumerable zamindaries of Orissa, both large and small, were put to auction in Calcutta because of non-payment of revenue. Nobody could know, nobody could hear of anything. Nobody could be warned that the Oriya nation was going to be devastated very soon.... The misery of the Oriyas did not end there. When for no fault of theirs, for no conceivable reason, and despite their innocence and loyalty, century-old properties were taken away from them, and they became beggars of the street, they wondered who was the king ? The English or the Bengalees ?" Then it was the famine - a graphic account - "Oh, what a horrible sight ! Not a soul to be seen even at noon. On the right hand side, along the sands of the river bank, only heaps of bones...... Even now a corpse is lying on the hot sands. Two vultures on a nearby tree are looking at it steadily. A group of crows are around, crowing excitedly. At times they are trying to peck at its eyes and ears. The bloodthirsty dogs are running around everywhere. The stench was awful, unbearable.....". Finally, it was the protagonist himself, who was to be carried away forcefully as dead even though he was alive - "They tried to pull at his head and legs. Jagu drew back his legs, and murmured. 'I am alive yet'..." Yet the human relationship sustains, and that is probably the only hope in an otherwise extremely distressing situation. *Ha Anna* was one of the early novels of Kanhucharan, who wrote prolifically after that, and got established as an important novelist after Independence. But *Ha Anna* even at that time was a significant novel and drew the readers' attention to an area which was not much touched upon by the novelists.

Homasikha by Ramprasad Singh was almost a special novel, because it clearly and purposely dealt with the leftist and socialistic ideas then current in Orissa and of which Ramprasad was a vocal creative exponent. The novel portrays the struggle of the exploited against the capitalist exploiter to the extent of even sacrificing one's own life with a view to establish a classless and casteless society without inequality and exploitation. The development of *Homasikha's* story is a clear vindication of these ideas. The protagonists are arrayed against each other - one, a homeless poor, sometime victim of a famine, and the other a rich zamindar given to desultory living and to unscrupulous torture of the poor and the helpless. Dharani, the exploited party, who has lost his wife and child to the exploiter, Bireswar, finally kills him, because he thinks that, that is the only justified retaliation for the acts of these people, and willingly submits himself to the authorities for punishment. That is not the end, the writer points out, because the revolution thrives on sacrifice, and to establish one's rights as a human being, resistance, bloodshed and murder are accepted means. Ramprasad was actively associated with Nabajuga Sahitya Sansad and with people like Bhagabati Panigrahi, and speaking of 'progressive literature' he writes elsewhere - "If man has to free himself from his present condition the first need is an independent literature. This literature will not have whatsoever any relation with god or religion, and will deal with man's problems as a human being..." The declaration in *Homasikha* to this effect was almost unambiguous - "If all the rich men in this world are uprooted and their wealth is distributed equally so that all should eat equally, dress equally, stay with equal convenience, then there would be no destitute in this earth." Ramprasad's novels showed a strong socio-political consciousness which was expressed both in his leftist ideas as well as in his support for freedom struggle. But his pre-Independence novels largely excelled in the former, and to that effect added a distinctly new direction to the novels of thirties and forties.

We have noted how Gandhian ideals motivated *Matira Manisha*. It also motivated *Kanamamu,* the only, though incomplete, novel of Laxmikant. The novel has a number of distinction. First it is the character of the protagonist Kanamanu (a generic name), a bohemian character, attached to none, yet interested in everybody, and always ready to help people whatever may be their need, even at times, at the cost of his own life. The character has other dimensions also. It was influenced by contemporary freedom-struggle and had developed the spirit of service, independence and courage to face extreme adversity, including police atrocities. An almost exceptional character, one may say, and apart from its motivation of idealism it stands on its own as a memorable character, loved and liked by generations of readers. Secondly, the sequences of plot reflect the varieties of Orissa's rural life, beginning from simple joys, entertainment and festivals to marriages, and to matters of fear and grief etc., in a way comparable to Nandakishor's *Kanaklata.* Thirdly, the structure of the novel incorporates conversational and colloquial language, and plenty of humour, the hall-mark of Laxmikant as a writer. *Kanamamu* grew from contemporary roots, yet flowered as a distinct and viable creation.

Dadibudha was one of the early novels of Gopinath, who grew to great eminence after Independence. *Dadibudha* had a singular distinction. It shifted the readers' attention from the social conditions and issues related to people in the coastal districts, particularly in the Cuttack district, to social conditions, habits, beliefs and manners of living of the tribals, in this case the Parajas, of the southern districts of Orissa. The location was a small remote village in the mountains, and the story begins with people setting up a deity in the form of a half-cut stump of a palm-tree round which and under whose patronage all the details of their living, from joys of birth to sorrows of death, gather and grow. Thus this is how the deity, the 'Dadibudha' was set up- “Ten axes fell on the

tree. Only a man's height was left out. Whatever remained was Dadibudha, a symbol.... and tying a white piece of cloth like a turban on the head, Dadibudha with large eyes continued to survey the village below like a watchful guardian. The whirlwind of mountains all around, a deep valley in the middle, and inside that, crowded with stones, curved seventeen times, sharp like a sickle, was the river Muran. In the midst of it, along the bank of the river, in the slopes of a high-rise ground were the houses of the village. On the high-rise ground was a small mound. And on its bald head the stump of a palm tree - the 'Dadibudha'." Finally when the people left the village due to the fear of prowling tigers for some other safer location, and the village was deserted, the Dadibudha remained alone where it was, near an ant-heap, and finally merged with it- "They all left, like a storm. Now everything is quiet. No longer smoke will rise from the thatch, no longer the heaps of cowdung in front, no longer children will make the houses dusty. The cattle and people will no longer make a bee-line from the nearby forests in the evening. No longer there will be dances in moonlit nights in tumultuous confusion. No quarrels, no laughter, all quiet, silent." But this is not the final message in *Dadibudha.* What is lost at one place raises its head at another place. One village is replaced by another, one 'Dadibudha' by another, and the tribe lives on - "Its immortal soul will be born in another village. It will let the young girls dance once more. It will pour out fistful of children like mango buds. It will let them drown in magic, and pour out all things profusely." *Dadibudha's* exposition of the tribal society was both simple and complex. It records the activities of a cohesive, close-knit tribal society as well as the subtle changes that were coming leading it towards a slow disintegration. *Dadibudha* had one precedent in *Bhima Bhyan,* published in the first decade of the century, though it has larger involvement and perspective, and it looks forward to Gopinath's own classic tribal novels, *Paraja* and *Amrutara Santana.*

Along with fiction, short story also came up as a popular form during the period. In a way Phakirmohan remained as the distant inspiration and his model was followed with a view to explore social issues and record social changes. But as in fiction, so too in short story, initially it had a weak existence, and the few short story writers we may note, in addition to Phakirmohan, were Chandrasekhar Nanda (1868-1932), Dayanidhi Mishra (1891-1958) and Dibyasing Panigrahi, their books being *Chitra, Katha Kadamba* and *Amruta Kankan* respectively. But the situation improved after 1920, when a number of writers took to story-form, and short story became a viable mode of creative expression. Some of the more well-known writers were, Jalandhar Dev, Godabaris Mishra, Laxmikant Mahapatra, Bankanidhi Pattanaik (1899-1961), Godabaris Mahapatra, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Anant Prasad Panda (1906-1989), Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, Anant Pattanaik and Sachi Routray.

Jalandhar Dev, apart from being a fine essayist, also wrote more than 20 stories between 1921 and 1940, a large number of which were published in *Utkal Sahitya.* The stories were both short and long and they generally dealt with the writer's disapproval of caste distinction, religious biogotry and of the attempts of people to twist the traditional instruction of the Shastras to their own selfish ends. Dev had a special sympathy for the tribals about whom he wrote in a number of his stories, the two good examples being his two stories *Atithi-Satkara* (Hosting a Guest, 1928) and *Bibaha Bhoji* (The Marriage Feast, 1931), that were complementary stories dealing with tribal simplicity, innocence and intimacy. On the other hand he strongly castigated the social attitudes against women, particularly as related to widows, and such marriages as child-marriage and the marriages of old men to young girls. Such stories were *Aai Natuni* (The Grand Mother and the Grand Daughter, 1929) and *Ghanisthata Khyanasthayi* (The Short-lived Intimacy,

1928). Structurally Dev's stories had a ruminative aspect, almost like the continuation of the themes of his essays and they significantly contributed to the developing social awareness against social ills and discrimination.

Godabaris Mishra, the well-known political leader and social-activist, wrote his stories in the recesses from politics. He wrote about 30 stories in the period between 1924 and 1950, most of which had strong social motivation and generally reflected the social conditions and social changes in the first part of the 20th century. He dealt with social hypocricy, administrative and political chicanery, the exploiter's cruel joy vis-a-vis the misery of the exploited, along with familial problems, nationalistic sentiments from history and love through human relationship. Some of Mishra's well-known stories were, *Panu Mishra* (Panu Mishra), *Sabat Pua* (Step Son), *Bada Pua* (The Eldest Son), *Tola Kanya* (Lifted Daughter-in-law), *Narira Gati* (The Ways of Women), *Dambhila Bandhu* (Dependable Relative), *Puani Ghara* (Bride's Homecoming), *Bandi* (The Prisoner), *Pola Unmochana* (Opening of the Bridge), *Annachhatra* (Food Distribution), *Sebatira Saba* (The Corpse of Sebati), *Bhaibhaga* (Brother's Share), etc. that dealt variously with child-marriage, dowry, administrative corruption, exploitation of the poor by businessmen and Government employees, the quarrel among brothers for property rights as well as strong caste discrimination, exploitation by the zamindars and rich men, old men marrying young girls, and the dubious influence of English education, in short socio-administrative ills that plagued Oriya society and people before Independence. A good example is *Pola Unmochana* which was written immediately after Independence. It was a political satire that highlighted the activities of ministers and officials. A newly constructed bridge was to be opened by the Minister, for which a sizeable crowd including the engineers and the officers had gathered- "Ten thousand eyes concentrated at one point. The Minister stood near the bridge under

the arch. On three sides three photographers were ready with their cameras to take the photographs. The District Board Chairman first garlanded the Minister. Then garlands came crowding one after another... The Chairman brought out a piece of paper from his pocket and read out his speech. Two short-hand reporters sitting on both the sides started taking down notes breathlessly. In the last sentence of his speech the Chairman requested the Minister to open the bridge. A red tape had been tied to both the sides of the arch..., A golden scissors in a silver plate was offered to the Minister to cut the tape. He took up the scissors and extended his hand to do the same... Suddenly everybody became hushed, silent. As if suddenly 5000 people ceased to breathe." The tone is detached, but the social implications and the subtle irony are obvious.

Laxmikant Mahapatra, poet and novelist, also wrote stories (about 60 after 1920) from time to time, particularly in the *Dagaro*, of which he was the founder-editor and which was devoted to humour. Thus his stories were often short in length to be adjusted in the pages of the magazine and often had a structure of humour. They dealt variously with immediate social matters, familial issues, and man-woman relationship, particularly as related to marriage. Stories such as *Adhikar* (Rights) and *Budha Sankhari* (The Old Bangle-Maker) on the one hand, and *Old Fool*, *Grahanka Pratisodha* (The Revenge of the Planets) and *Bhagyadosa* (Bad Luck) on the other, provide good examples of Laxmikant's range and competence. The first story highlights the extent to which the exploiter can go scot-free and be tolerated by the exploited, and two types of rights, one, the rich landlord's rights to have illicit connection with the wife of the poor man tilling his land, and second, the poor man's rights to punish the illicit affair by cutting off the heads of both, his wife's and her illicit paramour's. The story has a serious structure without any element of humour, and shows both social arbitrariness and individual protest. The second story, which is of a different tenor, has also sharp social implications

and without elements of humour. It shows strong filial emotions of an old man for a young married-woman that was stunted on the midway, and the expansiveness of relationship was cut short by cynical social manners when the young woman suddenly became a widow.

The other three stories had humour as an important part of the structure, and the motivation was, first, to entertain and secondly, to highlight social situation, and by implication to suggest reforms, Thus the story *Old Fool* shows how the desires of a young couple to get married were initially foiled by the conservative attitudes of old people, and were finally amicably resolved in marriage. The story *Bhagyodosa* is a post-marriage scenario, where the youngman resents the interference of his mother-in-law in his family affairs, and yet afraid to protest openly. But the third story *Grahanka Pratisodha* is comparatively more complicated and has different motivations. First, there is a social reference where decisions such as about marriage etc. are dependant on traditional social attitudes. Secondly, the habit of younger people to take to devious means to establish themselves socially. Thirdly, selfish interest takes precedence over mutual trust and friendship. Fourthly, and most importantly, it shows how human relationship is basically a fragile link unless it is sustained by mutual trust, in the absence of which it is reduced to pity and distress. The story is about a youngman's attachment for a young woman for which he tried to establish himself socially in devious ways, but was outwitted by another scheming youngman who finally married the young woman. The story has humour mixed with pathos - pathos at the predicament of the youngman at the end, and a subtle ironical dig at the prevailing social expediency. Humour played an important role in Laxmikant's creative mode, as well also in his expose of the society.

Bankanidhi Pattanaik's stories were few in number, and they were mostly collected in one volume entitled *Dhupachhaya* (Light

and Shade, 1941). The introduction to the book was written by Gopal Chandra Praharaj, the eminent essayist and lexicographer, who praised the 'inherent sweetness' of the stories and pointed out how they truly reflected the different situations of the contemporary Oriya society. In fact, a strong social consciousness, psychological conflicts and a deep moralistic attitude, along with a light humorous structure marked the best stories of Pattanaik. Two such stories were *Lachhmanji* and *Bidambana* (A Deception). Both deal with marriage. The story *Lachhmanji* tells how an educated Oriya youngman disapproved the marriage arranged for him by his guardians, and how in order to do a bit of fact-finding he took the disguise of an unknown Bihari youth (Lachhman) and travelled in train with his future bride from Gaya to Cuttack. The journey is full of excitement and humour, and the whole affair ends delightfully in a typical Oriya marriage scene when suddenly the youngman's secret is revealed, and the bridegroom is discovered as the same Lachhmanji. The second story also tells the decision of an educated youngman to marry against the wishes of his family in a poor family without dowry. But the marriage turns wry when the youngman discovers that his wife is of dark colour. What follows is both humorous and pathetic. The youngman shuns his wife and home, repents that unthinkingly he has committed a folly and ruined his life. The story ends when the lady falls seriously ill, the youngman rushes home, and to his chagrin finds out that though his wife is of dark complexion, is exceedingly beautiful, and they got happily united. Thus both the stories highlight one important contemporary social factor - the rising independent mentality of educated youngmen, and related such other social issues as, early marriage of girls, dowry, awareness of different social positions and caste, and inferior position of women in the society.

Godabaris Mahapatra, poet and novelist, wrote a number of pithy, short stories, beginning from 1923, of which many were

published in *Niakhunta,* the journal he founded. His stories too, like that of his contemporaries, dealt mainly with social issues and factors, particularly highlighting the pain and suffering of poverty-stricken villagers. Some of his well-known story-collections of-the time were *Pallichhaya* (In the Shade of the Village), *Ebe Madhya Banchichi* (Still Alive), *Garibar Bhagaban* (The Poor Man's God) and *Matira Maya* (The Attachment to the Soil) etc. and some well-known stories were, *Chandramoni Babunka Sansar* (Thc Family of Chandramoni Babu), *Margara Smruti* (The Memory of the Road), *Mu Dine Mantri Thili* (I Was a Minister Once), *Nila Mastrani* (Nila, Teacher); *Munda Sahada* (*Stumped Sahada* Tree), *Magunira Sagada* (Maguni Cart) and *Bikhyat Katakaru Akhyata Palli* etc. A good example was *Magunira Sagada.* (1936) which narrates how the affluent days of a cart-owner who used to ply passengers from a railway station to the villages in his cart, was cut short by the introduction of a passenger bus in the same route with a tragic end for the cart-owner - a graphic account of how the machine and its neutrality won over the manual labour and its intimacy, a record of the time change. Initially Maguni and his cart formed an integral part of the area where he lived - "Everyday in Khallikot State the sun rises and the sun sets. When it rains hard, people don't see the sun, but count their time by seeing Maguni's cart. Even in shivering cold when people continue to sit cosily in their verandas, Maguni yokes his two bullocks in the cart and drives them singing by the side of the mountain. People say that Maguni was their clock... Maguni's cart and his bullocks might not by themselves a great history of Khallikot, but surely they constituted some significant pages of its history". But the situation changed when a new passenger bus took over Maguni's route - "Singh's bus started plying between the station and the State. Maguni's cart also plied. But the bus was full, and the cart was empty. However early, even if at midnight, Maguni came to station with his cart, it didn't avail,

people went to the bus..." The end was tragic, it came slowly through continuous starvation - "Then the day people broke open the door of Maguni's hut and brought out his dead body, they found him lying on torn clothes with his driving-stick underneath." But Mahapatra had also different motivation, as one can see elsewhere, in stories, *Ebe Madhya Banchichi* and *Bikhyat Katakaru Akhyata Palli* (From Famous Cuttack to a Remote Village). The first story shows the indomitable spirit of man in spite of intense suffering and poverty, and the second, the decision of a youngman to leave the town to come over to the village for purposes of service and social work. Mahapatra's stories were not as pungent as his poems that had established him as a powerful satirical poet of the modern times. But his stories had seriousness of purpose too, and provided a good insight into the contemporary social situations.

Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, poet, novelist and essayist, could also establish himself as a fine story-writer, and his stories, more than anybody else's provided a viable substantiality to Oriya short story in the decades before Independence. Primarily his stories had strong social content and motivation. But at the same time they also suggested a significant shift - a shift from purely social scenes and problems towards an exploration of the self and the complex existence of modern man. The structure of his best stories had a peculiar impersonation, which often went together with the writer's deep understanding of human life and his singular ability to feel into the emotions of his characters. Thus we have on the one hand, such socially motivated stories as, *Dampatya Chitra* (Family Portrait), *Rudrakhya* (Beads), *Aparadhini* (Woman Criminal), *Niyatira Krida* (The Play of Destiny) and *Chhina Prustha* (Torn Page) etc., and on the other, stories of different dimensions and of humanitarian content such as, *Mansar Bilap* (The Moaning of Flesh), *Pangu* (The Lame), *Bijaya Uchhaba* (The Victory Celebration), *Odisare Mahajudha* (The Great War in Orissa), *Bitghara O Relagadi* (The Beat Post and the Train), *Dhuli*

(Dust), *Sapua*(The Snake Charmer) and *Premika* (The Lover) etc. *Dampatya Chitra* dealt with the lack of communication between newly married husbands and wives due to social strictures that denied free mixing between them and specified that they could meet only in the third part of the night which resulted in many cases of distress in family life. Similarly *Aparadhini* also dealt with a highly distressing social issue - the frequent marriages of young girls with old people and the consequent widowhood at a very young age with the attendant severe social stigma. In the story a 7-year old girl was given in marriage to an old man who died shortly afterwards leaving the young widow in a life of extreme misery, from which she was rescued by remarriage to a strong-willed youngman - a panacea (rarely available and strongly opposed by the society) suggested by the author. *Chhina Prustha* was another socially pinpointed story that related to social ostracism and torture of women. This is how the writer focusses on a girl's plight with unscrupulous parents- "She is as if a toy with such parents, a mere whim, and they like a gypsy letting the toy dance with threads from the background. The toy has no relationship whatever with the loss or gain, defeat or victory of the game- whatever happens is only the whim of the player. But the woman is not an inanimate being, a lifeless toy. Why such discrimination, such inhuman torture on her ?"

Oh the other hand, *Mansar Bilap*, *Pangu* and *Sapua* etc., for example, have other designs. They have strong humanitarian elements allied with pathos. In *Mansar Bilap* the zamindar sacrifices his pet deer to satisfy the greed of his guests only to be spurned for his inhumanity by his little daughter and the pet dog, both playmates of the deer. Real affection is contrasted with the callousness of the heart, and repentance comes only after the damage is done - the end is one of pathos and irony - "On seeing his little daughter's anger and the extent to which she has been hurt, tears streamed from the zamindar babu's eyes. In order to

hide that from his daughter, he shifted her to the nurse and moved away. But his own emotions became intolerable. He fell down on the bed and cried loudly...". At the end it was a tragic mingling of two animals, the pet deer and the pet dog whose friendship was suddenly cut short cruelly- "The woodcutters say, deep inside the forest when they chip the trees, they often hear a very painful moaning of a stifled voice. Is it Jolly's or Dora's ?" The story *Pangu* has similar undertones of pathos and a tragic ending. It is the story of a lame and stunted hunchback. Neglected and tortured as he is by his family members he is yet silently loved by a pariah dog, a lame cat, and by his young sister-in-law in whom he revives the memories of her lost brother, and who herself had a miserable, lonely life. At the end when Pangu was drowned while saving a little bird from the pond with his obedient dog in tow, the writer's commentary is both detached and sympathetic, and at the same time has a subtle ironical bearing- "Pangu's sudden accidental death did not affect anybody in the world, neither loss nor gain. But that image of affection of a woman, in the dark corner of a room, who was spending her days along with the lame cat of Pangu, she only knew what treasure her maternally affectionate soft heart had lost and how hot streams of tear oozed out of her...". Panigrahi's stories effected a shift in attitude in the thirties, which were followed up elaborately subsequently, particularly after Independence. Panigrahi's stories were collected in a number of volumes such as, *Dwadasi* (Twelve Together), *Mo Kahani Sari Nahin* (My Tale Not Ended), *Rasifala* (The Sign of Zodiac), *Sesharasmi* (The Last Rays) and *Sagarika* (From the Sea) etc., many of which were laterly published after Independence.

Ananta Prasad Panda's first story-collection entitled *Trunaguchha* (Bunch of Grass) was published in 1932, though his first important story, and incidentally second story, *Atrupta Basana* (Unfulfilled Desires) was published in 1926. Subsequently his other story collections were, *Savyatara Tale* (Under the

Civilization), *Manar Bhuta* (The Mind's Ghost), *Baramaja* (Mixed Taste) and *Naisa Sundari* (The Nightly Beauty) etc., a total of about 80 stories, a large number of which were written in the thirties and forties. In his introduction to his *Collected Works* , Part-I (1967) he recollects how Phakirmohan had been his earliest source of inspiration. But, he writes - "I collected the subject matters of my stories either directly from my life or from experiences of my service career. Most of my characters are from the lower rungs of the society, who are neglected, tortured and marginalized." Elsewhere, he categorized his stories, and pointed out that whereas *Trunaguchha* contained stories of his early phase of life, the stories of *Savyatar Tale* had foundation in economic conditions, and were accounts of insulted and injured people who were pressed hard by the "wheels" of such conditions. But the stories of *Manara Bhuta* and *Baramaja* were mostly psychological. The stories of *Savyatara Tale* that contains 21 stories, show Panda's social consciousness at its best. It was mostly a quick-changing economic structure without any planning or attempts to co-ordinate the change. The result was economic inequality, incompatibility, distress and exploitation. The rise of capitalism was contrasted with the consequent misery and poverty of people who lost. This relates variously to dispossession of land (*Rajbhaga*, The King's Share), dislocation of profession (*Gopi Sahu Dokan*, Gopi Sahu's Shop) and *Sagada*, (The Go-Cart), the ruin of cottage industry (*Dunia Bichar* The World's Decision, *Pagal Kie*, Who is Mad ?, *Dhana Kutuni*, The Woman Paddy- Pounder), and in general, the breakdown of the traditional economic structure of the village where people used to support each other for their upkeep, at the impact of outside forces. The carterer's reaction in *Sagada* on losing his professions is typical (One may recall Godabaris Mahapatra's *Magunira Sagada*) - "Sankirtana was not alone. There were hundreds and thousands of carterers who plied their carts between Patnagada and Sambalpur and earned their livelihood. How happy

they were ! How comfortably they lived with their families ! But where is that now ? They are all dreams. Since the days these bearded, turbaned Punjabis with their giant machine-carriers have moved to this area misery has come, and the families of innumerable carterers have fallen to ruin." Panda's stories have many references to social ills and social discrimination, and his dominant tone has been one of melancholy and agony at the plight of people in the changing situations.

Bhagabati Panigrahi, brother of Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, was a firm believer in Bolshevik Revolution, and the new emergent cultural climate. He wrote only 12 stories, all motivated towards socialistic realism and social justice, and directed attention towards the lowly and the oppressed. This was, in a way, the beginning of political current in Oriya story. *Shikar* (The Hunting, 1936) was his most famous and popular story. As he himself declares in the preface to the story it was meant to attack at the roots of bourgeoise values. It was about a famous but low-class hunter who meets out natural justice to an oppressor, and in his innocence expects a rich reward. He realises too late that he is the victim of upper class privilege and bourgeois law, and is hanged. The narration is short, crisp and direct - "At last the day to be hanged came. He was asked what was his final wish. He said, 'My bakhsheesh'. 'O.K., you will get your bakhsheesh. Come..' saying so he was taken away. A bag of dark cloth was put on his head. Ghinua thought probably he would be blind-folded, and then they would pour gold and silver in his hands. The government have so many ways, so many restrictions. Do they ever give bakhshees just like that ? He will show all that when he returns home. How happy his wife would be on seeing that ! He will have good houses, till land, and be happy. There will be no longer that Govind Sardar to steal away everything.. Suddenly something struck his neck." Panigrahi's other stories that had more or less content of social justice and had similar or related attitudes were, *Jangali* (Junglee, 1929), *Banchita*

(Deprived, 1932) *Mishranka Kopa* (The Anger of Mr. Mishra, 1932), *Mrutura Bibechana* (Consideration of Death, 1934), *Jhada* (The Storm, 1934) and *Hatudi O Da* (The Hammer and the Sickle, 1936) etc. Bhagabati had an untimely death at the age of 36. But his vivid account as well as force of narrative and strong conviction, had a germinating influence on his contemporaries.

Anant Pattanaik, the poet, was Bhagabati's associate, and like him was strongly motivated by social realism, Marxist ideals, and socio-political factors. Gopinath Mohanty's comment on him given in 1988, on the occasion of his first death anniversary was very pertinent - "The Russian Revolution of 1917, opened up great vistas of hope for all those who earned their bread through their sweat, and for the tortured and exploited all over the world. All those who were extra sensitive among the youth, burst into flame in this fire. And Anant Pattanaik was one among them." Pattanaik rose to eminence as a poet after Independence, or at the Independence time, and his stories were collected in a volume laterly, entitled *Chadha Uttara* (Ascent and Descent, 1976). The stories were few, but they reflected his twin concern for Gandhism and contemporary struggle for freedom on the one hand, and left progressive ideas on the other. Such stories were, for example, *Murderer, Pheria* (Return), and *Chadha Uttara* etc. The story *Pheria* deals with the transformation of a one-time Satyagrahi for India's Independence into a salesman for commercial soaps and the poignant moments he had to suffer when the mean reality of the present was compounded with the glorious hopes of the past. Similarly the story *Chadha Uttara* narrates the atrocities of the British Police and their attempts to suppress the freedom struggle in which even a policeman and his young wife and child become victims. In *Murderer* too, the man initially protesting against exploitation finally turns to be an exploiter himself. Pattanaik's stories, though few, had strong points of view and attitudes and had a subtle but devastating irony about them.

The other associate of Bhagabati was Sachi Routray, poet who was established as a poet before Independence and rose to greater eminence after Independence. In the thirties and forties, along with poetry, he too wrote a number of stories that had psychological motivation as well as social orientation. Probably *Bisarjan* (Sacrifice), published in 1933 was Routray's first story. Subsequently, most of his stories were published in the thirties and early forties, such as, *Astarag* (Last Rays), *Rikshabala* (Rickshawala), *Anguthi* (The Finger), *Masanira Phula* (The Flower of the Graveyard), *Andharua* (Darkly), *Mala Kain* (The Dead Lotus), *Matir Taj* (The Earth's Crown) etc. The first story *Bisarjan* dealt with the agonies of a semi-mad woman, victim of a rich man's lust, in the context of the procession of Durga-images in Cuttack city. Social motivation continued as a powerful motivation in Routray's stories, almost at par with the poetry that he wrote at that time. Thus stories such as *Rickshabala* (1937) and *Rajapua* (The King's Son, 1940) narrated the victimization and exploitation of people in the lower rungs of the society, by people situated in the higher rungs, *Anguthi* (1937) the efforts of the rich and the privileged people to foil and suppress the justified agitation of the poor and the labourers, and *Raja, Rani and Kukkura* (The King, the Queen and the Dog) the revolt of the subjects against the tyranny of the kings.

The story *Andharua* shows many of social evils and privileges, such as the exploitation of the zamindars, the ferociousness of religion and Brahminism, the painful end of superstitions, and the helplessness of poor people etc., in a graphic manner. Pahali Pradhan, the protagonist, a simple, innocent farmer, had to end his life in extremely painful and adverse situation due to the evil designs and machinations of the socially privileged class - "Pahali's skeleton on the lonely mound. A ferocious imaginary ghost's long shadows pressed on him. No escape from that. And all that got together with it were long day's hunger,

starvation, want, agony and insult. As if all have jointly reduced his mind to smitherins. Pahali sees nothing in front, no house, no family, no wife, no relatives. Only an empty loneliness. A huge book. And on its pages only the pictures of the emissaries of death, dark eyes, sharp horns. As if all the letters of that book are like so many pressing-stones." On the other hand, in stories such as *Masanira Phula* one is not directly concerned with the contemporary social or political problems. These problems come only as a part of the total context from which the characters grow to live their singular moments. The grotesque picture of the burning ground which the writer gives in the story is full of horrors. It is at such a place the dead body of a young woman who died of illegitimate conception is being burnt. Jagu Tiadi, a professional carrier of dead bodies, callous and cruel, suddenly wakes up to a sense of beauty and love in spite of the ugliness of the burning body- "He could see how the pale face of the young women looked like a fading lotus in the moonlight. A jungle of dark, curling hair spread around her face, as if the dark shadow of the clouds at the back of the moon in the sky... The grace of fading flowers rippled over her face. The waves of moonlight broke over her scattered hair... The flames leapt. The protruding tongue of the fire started to lick out everything. The fair, fleshy body of the young woman was burnt to darkness, and as boils erupted layers of skin peeled out." Routray's stories had distinctive style and language as well as strong direct attitudes, and though he almost left writing stories after forties, yet his contribution as a whole in story-writing in the thirties and forties remained significant and fruitful.

(*vii*)

We have seen how beginning with Radhanath Roy's *Bibeki*, prose, particularly reflective, discursive and descriptive prose related to sociological, psychological and religious issues etc., emerged as a powerful current, and had such remarkable writers

as, Gaurisankar Roy, Mrutunjay Rath, Biswanath Kar, Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Jagbandhu Singh, Jalandhar Dev, Sashibhusan Roy etc. Most of these writers were born in the early years of the second part of the 19th century, and died either before Independence or immediately after Independence, and their effective writings were mostly done in the first quarter of the 20th century. But the tradition of prose-writing continued and we come across a number of younger writers who were born in the later years of the second part of the 19th century and continued to live till the sixties and early seventies of the 20th century. They contributed substantially to Oriya prose-writing in the two decades before Independence. They were, Bipin Bihari Roy (1887-1971), Ratnakar Pati (1889-1969), Birupakhya Kar (1893-1968), Govinda Tripathy (1899-1962), Braja Bihari Mohanty (1902-1957) and Kapileswar Das (1906-1990).

Bipin Bihari Roy's native place was the village Polio, that had a good domiciled Bengali habitation, in the P.S. Patkura, in the Cuttack district and he had family relationship (a grandson) with Gaurisankar Roy and Ramsankar Roy. But he was born and brought up in the ex-native State Ranpur, at a distance of about 60 kms. towards the south from Bhubaneswar, where his father Nityanand Roy had a job with the king. Roy read in Cuttack and Calcutta, and got his M.A. (First Class) in Philosophy from Scottish Church College, in 1910, and subsequently got a job as Professor of Philosophy in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, where he continued till 1943. His first venture in writing was a book on logic, (1921-1922). But his first collection of essays entitled *Prabandha Sopan* (The Ladders of Essays) was published in 1937, which he undertook, he maintained, on the support of some friends, to meet the want of prose-essays in Oriya. The book contained 16 essays. Subsequently his two other essay-collections were published, entitled *Samajik Prabandha* (Social Essays) Part-I and Part-II, in the years 1942 and 1945, and they contained almost all the essays,

that he had written till that time, about a total of 32 essays, and they generally dealt with religion, psychology, ethics, social issues, politics and literature etc.

Brajasundar Das, the famous editor of *Mukura,* wrote a preface to *Prabandha Sopan* where he claimed that the book was like a building decorated with many 'jewels', and hoped that being the fruits of matured and independent thoughts the essays would open the doors of the readers' mind to broad and independent areas. Similarly Nilakantha Das, the famous poet, essayist and editor of *Nababharat,* in his preface to *Samajik Prabandha*, praised Roy's insight and analytical power and his general philosophical attitude towards life. In fact Roy's essays have a number of dimensions. Beginning with such essays as *Bhagabananka Rajyare Dukha* (Sorrow in God's Kingdom), *Mora Istadeva* (My Personal Deity), *Munra Parichay*a (The Identity of the Self) and *Darsanar Drusti* (The Way of Philosophy) etc. that deal with philosophical beliefs and attitudes, he goes over to essays such as *Parivar* (Family), *Samaj Chitra* (The Social Picture), *Paribartan O Pragati'* (The Change and Progress), *Byakti O Jati* (The Individual and the Society), *Samanata Ki Swadhinata* (Is Equality Independence), *Samajar Sreni Samasya* (The Problem of Class in the Society) and *Mora Desha* etc. that deal with various social as well as political factors. The essays had a serious tone and a seriousness of purpose. The style too, though plain and direct, yet academically oriented. The emphasis was not so much to entertain as to put forth a point of view, and to aim at a close analysis of the issue at hand. An extract, on the relevance of family - "Mutual love and affection, support and sympathy are the prime motivations of a family. The family is the only area of unalloyed work, pure love and devotion. These love, devotion and duty are not confined only to those who are living. The work·of a family goes through generations. After one's death the responsibility passes to somebody else. After father uncle, after brother brother, after

husband wife - that is how they come to occupy each other's place. It is not that people come along in vacant places, the continuity of work is maintained, and that which is not completed gets completed."

Ratnakar Pati was born in the village Biribati, about 15 kms from Cuttack, towards the east, in poor situations, and had to struggle against extremely adverse conditions till he got himself established as a Professor of Philosophy in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. Like B.B. Roy, he spent his entire career as a teacher, and like him too, the paucity of prose-essays in Oriya, motivated him to write such pieces in contemporary journals. Pati's deepest inspiration was philosophy, both Indian and Western (he wrote a book entitled *History of Philosophy* in English), and his essays had often a sharp ring of philosophical attitudes and motivation. "They aim at taking up complex matters of man's life, and arrive at a reasonable solution.", he said, and pointed out that his essays would be based upon 'fundamental truths of life', 'thought-provoking' and 'emotive'. His first collection of essays, containing 14 essays, entitled *Prabandha Prakas, Part-I* was published in 1926, and had such essays as, *Santosh* (Contentment), *Bismruti* (Forgetfulness), *Anutap* (Repentance), *Sanjamabidhi* (The Rules of Discipline), *Naitika Runa* (The Debts of Morality), *Naitika Bala* (The Force of Morality), *Atita Bartaman O Bhabisyata* (The Past, the Present and Future), *Manab Jibanare Darsanara Sthana* (The Place of Philosophy in Human Life) and *Samaj Sanskar* (Social Reforms) etc. In short, the essays ranged from discourses on states of mind and moral issues etc. to a contemplation of passage of time, social reforms and the philosophical attitudes inherent in man's understanding of life. Pati's second collection of essays entitled *Prabandha Prakas Part-II* (Exposition of Essays, Part-II) was published in 1965. The book contained 16 essays, most of which were originally written earlier, in the thirties and forties, though revised and enlarged for the concerned edition. The essays

such as *Bisware Manabara Sthan* (Man's Position in the Universe), *Rajnaitik Khetrare Naitikatar Sthan* (The Place of Morality in Politics), *Dharma O Jiban* (Life and Religion), *Jatiya Charitra* (National Character) *Nagarikara Dayitwa* (The Citizen's Responsibility), and *Adhunika Savyata* (The Modern Culture) etc., had almost range and dimension similar to essays in Part-I. The essays were deeply admired, and particularly the first book (Part-I) remained as a compulsory textbook for many years in the Universities of Calcutta, Patna, Utkal and Andhra. A few examples may be cited. Thus this is how he writes on 'contentment'- "Believing that contentment is easily available don't by mistake think that it is temporary satisfaction. Remember, contentment is life's ideal. It is the fulfilment of life. In a weak mind if you feel easily satisfied and become idle, you will never get real contentment. On the other hand you will be in the dullest state of mind. Therefore be engaged in the gradual realization of ideal contentment. And you will find the limits of your soul would be extended, happiness will blossom, and there will be a gradual realization of fulfilment in life." In a different vein he writes on social change - "What are the reasons for so many agitation in the society everywhere. On one side the newly-educated group's desire for comparative reforms and eagerness to bring changes in the society. On the other, the complete conservatism in pursuance of ancient traditions, of people other than the newly-educated, who are ever ready to check the pace of the change. That is, on one hand, the mentality of a full orthodoxy, and on the other, an evolving desire, and because of the conflict of these two, there have been such a lot of agitation in the areas of social reforms today."

Birupakhya Kar was born and brought up at Dampada, a small but picturesque ex-State, on the river Mahanadi. He read at Puri and Calcutta, secured graduation and a degree in law, and settled down at Jajpur for a career of legal practice. He was keenly

interested in history and in the preservation of cultural monuments, and his writings generally showed a strong historical motivation. They can be divided broadly into three categories, first, that deal with ancient Orissa, mostly of historical content; secondly, those that deal with mythological and legendary tales; and thirdly, the essays related to cultural issues. Thus essays in the first group are, *Utkalare Baudha Yugar Itihas* (The History of the Buddhist Era in Orissa), *Prachin Utkalare Jalajatra* (The Account of Navigation in Ancient Orissa) and *Prachin Jajapur* (Ancient Jajpur) etc.; in the second group, *Saraswati Puja* (The Worship of Goddess Saraswati), *Magha Amabasya* (The Magha New-Moon Day) and *Soma Puja* (The Worship of Soma) etc.; in the third group, *Ama Sanskruti* (Our Culture) and *Jati Bichar* (The Consideration of Caste). Kar's style is easy and direct, and the approach is analytical and based on reason. Thus this is how he writes on caste - "The caste hostility that mincemeats India today has its origin in our ignorance. Our Sastras and Puranas are all right, but we behave like blind in not understanding their true intent. Those who give excuses of the Sastras and the Puranas and hate each other by virtue of their own egos, let them look at the same ancient texts carefully. They will find that in fact in our society all castes belong to one caste, and there is no discrimination whatsoever".

Braja Bihari Mohanty was born in the village Atoda, in the P.S. Salepur, in the Cuttack district, but his family migrated to his mother's village Uttamapur, in the P.S Cuttack, and settled there. He got his graduation and a degree in law from Patna University and practised as a lawyer. But subsequently he changed his career, joined administrative service in the ex-State Talcher, and finally got absorbed in the Orissa Administrative Service after the States' merger. He wrote his essays, a total 64, in the thirties and forties, mostly in the contemporary journal *Sahakar,* about 45 of which were subsequently collected in two volumes, entitled *Chitra* (Portraits, 1935) and *Sadhana* (Austere Practice, 1947). The essays

have diverse motivation. For example, some are given to a discussion of social problems, some others to national issues with patriotic orientation, others to an analysis and focussing of general, contemporary situations related to contemporary living, and still others to an awareness of beauty and joy on the one hand, and an insight into one's own psyche on the other. Some of the relatively more important essays so listed are, *Jatiya Sikhya* (National Education), *Biswavidyalaya Sikhya* (The University Education), *Atitar Udbodhana* (Invoking the Past), *Jugadharare Jubasakti* (The Power of Youth in the Context of Time), *Bharatar Jagarana* (The Awakening of India), *Bharatar Samasya* (The Problems of India), *Manab Pragati* (The Progress of Man), *Nari O Samaj* (The Women and Society), *Narira Swatantrya* (The Singularness of Women), *Itihasara Dhara* (The Flow of History), *Biplab* (Revolution), *Bhabukar Drusti* (The Vision of a Thinker), *Sukhar Sandhan* (In Search of Happiness), *Jnana O Karma* (Work and Wisdom), *Abasada* (Depression), *Santira Sopan* (The Steps to Peace), *Uchhwas* (Emotion), *Kala O Prakruti* (Art and Nature), *Saundarjya O Kala* (The Beauty and Art) and 'Se O Mu' (I Myself and the Other Person) etc.

This is how he speaks of the nation's aims and ideals - "Though a nation's greatness can be known by its attempts to recover the past glory, yet without proper ideals its timely progress is hampered. While coming out of darkness and ignorance we get into a different danger. Our training and education had gone wry, and imitation of the new Western education became so strong that it weakened our national life in a different way. It always tried to draw us towards the charms of money and luxury. The Western civilization had flourished through acquiring of wealth and construction of plants and factories, and India's vision has dimmed to that extent. To take up imitation as the only support is not the aim of national life. The encouragement and strength that one gets by looking at the past has not yet become a part of India's

realization." In a different mood he speaks of 'emotion'- "The emotion of heart brings a special distinction to life. It has its influence on every change of life's path, emotion comes, and then passes away. But it leaves a wave of rhythm, which always secretly vibrates in the heart. Whatever has been said in the past when two people have joined their hearts, whatever vibrations there have been, man tends to forget that. But he fails to forget that unless some change of heart takes place. The soft rippling wind of moonlit night in the spring brings automatic waves of pleasure in the heart. If some unspoken sweet message of the heart joins those waves, then that engraves delicately in man's memory. May be the lost memory of some intimate union of another birth awakes again, and with a view to show newness attracts the movement of life towards itself..." Braja Bihari's essays had many facets, such as related to history, politics, sociology, philosophy, literature, culture etc., and were written in a direct, straight forward style. They had insight, originality, as well as a strong structure of reason and contemporaneity and brought a good deal of distinction to the writer.

Govinda Tripathy was born at Ramahanspur, near Sriramchandra Pur Sasan, in the Puri district. His first name was Balavadra Mishra which was later changed to Govinda Tripathy by adoption. He grew up in adverse family situations, but could successfully complete his education, passed M.A. in English, from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and stood first in Patna University. He taught in Ravenshaw College for a while, and then subsequently joined Bihar and Orissa Civil Service in 1927. Tripathy's earliest writing - an essay entitled *Swarna O Raupya Mudra* (The Gold and Silver Coins) was published in *Sahakar* in 1922, and by the end of 1923 he had written 7 more essays, such as *Antarjatiya Byabasaya* (International Trade), *Bajar* (Market) and *Bharatar Bartaman Abastha O Tar Pratikar* (India's Present Condition and its Remedy) etc. that were published either in *Sahakar* or *Mukura.*

Besides, he also wrote novels - *Pramad,* (Mistake, 1925,) *Patitar Atmakatha* (The Autobiography of a Fallen Woman, 1930) and *Mayabi* (Deceitful, 1941,) and made a name, and got himself established as one of the foremost essayists of the time.

Tripathy's essays were sharp, pointed and often projected original point of view at variance with the prevalent attitudes and beliefs, and invariably in direct, reasoned and colloquial language. His essays had a good range. Beginning from reflective, analytical and meditative essays he went over to a discussion of contemporary social, socio-economic and political issues as well as to such areas as related to national pride and national upliftment with particular reference to Orissa and the Oriyas. He too had a number of essays on literature and different aspects of literature - an area which was his first love. He wrote more than 60 essays before Independence, and some distinguishing essays were, *Bharatar Bartaman Abastha O Pratikar* (in 5 parts, from 1923 to 1933), *Akash Kaina* (The Fruit of the Sky, in 3 parts, 1937-1938, on socialistic political ideas); *Batua* (Small Cloth-Bag, 1940), *Sanket O Suchana* (Signs and Suggestions, in 4 parts, 1928-1929), *Kana Kuha* (Soft Speaking, 1939), *Sahitya Prachya O Paschatya* (Literature East and West), *Sahityare Kalpana* (literature and Imagination) etc. Thus this is how he speaks of the essence of civilization in the essay *Batua* - "Oh my brother, you have understood it wrongly. You may not conquer a country, but war is not going to leave you. The fight with swords etc. may stop. May not be necessary at all. But you have to fight against ignorance, incivility and dullness. The battle for civilization does not end with swords and bullets. The purposes of civilization do not end with that. The civilization is not like mango or pineapple. Civilization is an informed voice, a voice from emptiness, a purpose, a concept, a belief only...". Or elsewhere (*Kana Kuha*) speaking of the interference of the socialistic ideas in literature, he says-" I am not going to speak of good or bad, fairness or unfairness of socialism. Because that is

the job of the politicians. I am not a politician. I only beg to submit, why politics into literature ? The socialist poet will write poems on socialism, the capitalist will write poems on capitalism. The poems will be written as per the writer's taste, education and training. I feel that all those who read poems in pursuance of a writer's political habit do nothing except swimming the fog. The aim of a writer is beauty, grace. Whatever may be the writer's political belief, if there is beauty in his writing, then the readers and critics will get pleasure, and it should be. If a writer can do that much, then he is a successful writer, a fit poet. If that much is not there, then however thousands of big things you write about, or pour smart, fresh ideas into literature, that will not be useful for literature. That is not literature. That will be philosophy, politics, social theories or may be anything else in the garb of literature." Or, elsewhere, talking on what may be the nature of lies (*Michha Katha*) - "Then we have seen three things - truth, untruth and lies or imagination. Lies are not opposite to truth. Lies constitute the body, truth the soul. Going through lies, or with the support of lies one has to come to truth. Untruth is apposed to truth. He who is a writer understands this. Because the real writer's job is to provide correct and respective position to truth, untruth and lies. The writer of *Holy Bible*, the poet Vyasa of Gita, and the poet Valmiki of the Ramayana, are the early devotees of the God of Lies. Probably you may now take up a stick and rush at me to beat me. But the writers of Gita and Bible, not at one place, or two places, but in thousand places have said one thing - speak truth, speak truth, don't tell lies. You are wrong. They have said don't tell untruth. It you don't understand correctly what is said, and confuse untruth with lies, then that is the defect of your intelligence."



3

POST-INDEPENDENCE

Independence was a watershed for the whole of India, and so too for Orissa. It released both physical and mental energy, and looked forward to a completely new dispensation and habit of mind as was never done before. There was immense development in the infrastructure of living as well as a continuous upward swing of the human spirit. What happened all over India, happened in Orissa too, and new vistas of development and vision marked the new ways of living after Independence.

The most important thing to happen in Orissa immediately after Independence was the administrative merger of 26 Oriya States with Orissa. When Orissa was formed as a separate province in April, 1936, it was done with 6 districts - 3 coastal, 2 southern and one western. After the merger, the number of districts rose to 13, and for the first time, the administrative and mental cohesiveness of Oriya speaking people, for which Madhusudan Das had fought and died, was substantially achieved. Added to this was the establishment of the first University, Utkal University, for Orissa, in 1943, thanks to the efforts of Godabaris Mishra, whose effective operation after Independence, had a signal influence on Oriya intelligence and aspiration. The first General Election on adult franchise basis took place in 1951-1952, which started channelizing the gains of Independence. Orissa was a part of the total stream, and in spite of its long years of deprivation and neglect, it could rise on its own, and contributed to the new spirit of consolidation and advancement.

First of all, it would be interesting to note the expansion in education. In 1947-48, that is, at the time of Independence, Orissa had 6814 Primary Schools, 282 Middle English Schools, 106 High or Secondary Schools and 12 Colleges, and had respectively 2

lakhs 55 thousand, 32 thousand, 15 thousand, and 4 thousand enrolment. The lone University, Utkal University, was an examining body. In subsequent years, that is, in 1950-51, 1960-61, 1969-70, 1978-79 and 1988-89, the numbers and enrolment were respectively 9801 and 3 lakhs 15 thousand, 21858 and 14 lakhs 29 thousand, 26554 and 18 lakhs 26 thousand, 34593 and 26 lakhs 12 thousand, 39293 and 35 lakhs 2 thousand at the Primary level; 501 and 40 thousand, 1307 and 1 lakh 7 thousand, 4047 and 3 lakhs 18 thousand, 7150 and 5 lakh one thousand, 9125 and 9 lakhs 70 thousand at the Middle English level; 172 and 16 thousand, 452 and 44 thousand, 1543 and 1 lakh 71 thousand, 2167 and 2 lakhs 63 thousand, 4239 and 7 lakhs 66 thousand at the Secondary level; 14 and 6 thousand, 29 and 11 thousand, 77 and 42 thousand, 106 and 88 thousand, 433 and 2 lakhs 6 thousand at the College level. By 1988-89 Orissa had 5 Universities (3 general, one in agriculture and technology, and one in Sanskrit and Oriental learning), 3 Medical Colleges, 5 Engineering Colleges and 13 Training Colleges for teachers, in addition, a large number post-graduate departments in all Universities and a number of research institutes. Along with that the growth of decadel literacy rate in Orissa as from 1941 to 1991 is as follows:- 1941 - 9.7%, 1951 - 15.81%, 1961 - 21.73%, 1971 - 26.18%, 1981 - 34.12% and 1991 - 48.55%. Though the literacy growth rate in 1991 is below the national average in 1991 (52.11%), yet in comparison to what prevailed before Independence the improvement was very substantial, and created an immensely fertilizing area for production of literature.

To other allied areas which may be noted at this point, relate to the growth of newspapers and media on the one hand, and literary journals on the other. The Independence spurred a quick growth of daily newspapers that opened their pages to relevant news, information and ideas, and established a close rapport between the writers and the reading public. Such newspapers would

be around 40, that came out from all parts of Orissa, and though many of them were short-lived, yet in general, they succeeded in spreading an extensive and intelligent awareness of contemporary times and problems among the people. The relatively more important newspapers were, to name a few, *The Samaj* (started 1919, continues), *Prajatantra* (started 1947, continues), *Pragatibadi* (started 1973, continues) *Dharitri* (started 1974, continues), *Sambad* (started 1984, continues), *Samaya* (started 1996, continues) and *Matrubhumi* and *Kalinga* that were published in the fifties and the sixties respectively have ceased publications since. The Cuttack Station of All India Radio was established in 1948 with limited transmission power. This was subsequently upgraded in 1958 and again in 1974, and its programmes, of song, music, drama etc, involved a large number of writers and artists, and covered almost two thirds of Orissa's population through its 11 centres all over Orissa. Similarly television services started in Orissa in 1973, and subsequently DD-1 had 62 transmitters and DD-2,8 and their programmes reached a large part of Orissa.

Literary journals too, multiplied. Godabaris Mahapatra's *Niakhunta* and Laxmikant Mahapatra's *Dagaro* also continued after Independence. But *Dagaro's* editorship was taken over by Laxmikant's son Nityananda. Newer journals came out after Independence and continued to be published in the fifties and even after that. No doubt many journals were short-lived but always newer journals took their places. By a rough counting we come across more than 200 journals, almost all literary, that were published for varying periods after Independence till almost the end of the century. Some significant journals to be noted in this connection were, *Jhankar* (1951) from Cuttack, *Asanta Kali* (1949) from Calcutta, *Chaturanga* (1946) from Bolangir, *Sankha* (1948) from Bamanda, *Kumkum* (1948) from Bombay largely devoted to humour, *Chandrika* (1953) from Baripada, *Nabajiban* (19 57) from Cuttack, *Nabajyoti* (1957) from Pondichery, *Jana Sahitya* (1956)

and *Malaya* (1958), both fully devoted to novel from Cuttack, *Vina* (1958) from Tikali, Andhra, *Prajna* (1960) from Cuttack, *Nabapatra* (1962) from Rourkela, *Nabarabi* (1970) from Calcutta, *Manas* (1973) from Bhubaneswar, *Panchajannya* (1980) from Bhubaneswar, *Istahar* (1979), from Bhubaneswar, *Amrutayana* (1981) from Bhubaneswar, and *Pratibesi* (1983) from Calcutta. An interesting journal was *Sucharita*, that was first published in the seventies and was completely devoted to women-writers. In fact the publication of journals never ceased and their numbers increased as the century advanced. Some even went for 'super specialization' like being completely devoted to poetry or story or drama or criticism or even translation. Every year, the Durga Puja occasion, in the months of September and October, provides the journals with a singular opportunity to come out with larger format and with innumerable pieces of creative writing in all branches of literature. The cumulative effect of all that - the education, the newspapers; the media and the journals, released a tremendous energy for literature and surcharged the atmosphere with a great deal of excitement and newness. Oriya literature after Independence impinged upon that atmosphere.

Founders

The post-Independence Oriya literature was the product of change in time, a change in response and sensibility that resulted in a change of attitude and understanding. It was an outward movement, a movement away from the local concerns to larger contexts, both Indian and larger than Indian, and was perceived and achieved in a number of dimensions. The four persons who laid the foundation of post-Independence Oriya literature, severally and together, were highly talented and dedicated writers, whose roots in fact were in pre-Independence days, but came to rich and complete flowering in the post-Independence period. They were, Gopinath Mohanty (1914-1991), *Sachi Routray,*

Manoranjan Das (b. 1921) and Surendra Mohanty (1922-1990). Gopinath Mohanty wrote in many forms, but excelled in novel and story. Surendra Mohanty too excelled in story and novel. But Sachi Routray remained confined mainly to poetry, and Manoranjan Das drama.

Gopinath Mohanty was born at Nagabali, a village on the river Sidhua (a branch of Kathajodi), about 10 kms from the Cuttack city, towards the east. His was an old, aristocratic family, that had taken to new ways of living at the turn of the century, and many of its members worked as engineers in different parts of Bihar and Orissa at that time. His father, Suryamoni Mohanty, a man who lived his life in Yogic discipline, worked as an engineer with the king of Sonepur (in the ex-State of Sonepur, in Orissa) for long years, where all his sons except Gopinath were born. Gopinath's childhood was spent in his village, but schooling was done at Sonepur and in Patna (Bihar) and college education in Ravenshaw College at Cuttack, from where he stood first in Patna University, in English M.A., in 1936, Professionally Gopinath was an administrator. He joined Orissa Administrative Service in 1938 and retired in 1969 after which he settled in Bhubaneswar. In between he was posted in different parts of Orissa in different administrative capacities, including for more than 10 years in the southern tribal districts. Thus in a way, Gopinath acquired extensive knowledge and intimate experiences about Orissa, Orissa's villages and emerging towns, the remote and yet slowly being opened-up tribal areas as well as men, women and tribals in different states and conditions of life. All that could be seen strongly reflected in his writings, particularly in his novels and stories - an intensely sensitive and creative response, the type of which was hardly seen in Oriya literature before. Gopinath was a very alert writer, that is, beginning from mid-thirties he continued to write almost till his death and used almost every form of literature. Thus apart from novels and stories where he excelled, he wrote poems, plays,

biographies, critical essays etc. as well as his own autobiography - a unique record of events and emotions. Even he had a hand in translation and he translated books from Bengali, Hindi, English, including Tolstoy's *War and Peace, Holy Koran*, *Holy Bible* and Tulshi Das's *Ramcharita Manas* into Oriya, and reversely too, his own novel *Paraja* into English. In addition his long association with the tribals led him to produce a number of books on tribal languages and culture, such as related to the Kondhs, Parajas, Sauras and Godabas etc.

Gopinath's earliest writings, written before 1940, were two plays, entitled *Dina Dipahare* (At Noon) and *Muktipathe* (On the Path of Deliverance) which were serialised in *Nababharat*, in 1937; a group of critical essays on various aspects of literature, written in a fictional style, and serialised in *Sahakar*, in between 1936 and 1939 (published together under the title *Kalasakti,* The Power of Art, in 1973), and a few short stories such as, *Bhaga* (Bhagabond, 1935) about the experiences of a poor, problem-ridden student who lived on tuitions, and *Dan* (Dan, 1936), the story of a poor, old, helpless maidservant on her last emotional foray. An eventful year for Gopinath was 1940, when he got married, got a transfer to Koraput, the southern tribal district, and his first novel entitled *Mana Gahirar Chasa* (Tilling of the Mind's Depth) got published from Cuttack. In a general way, it was a psychological novel, that dealt with the feelings and emotions of an individual in conflict with the taboos and restrictions of the society. The same year, two of his long stories were published. They were *Patapani* (Water in Low Land) and *Poda Kapala* (The Burnt Destiny) that dealt with the sorrowful life of poor farmers in the former, and the miserable life of a poor castaway girl in the later. Gopinath did not stay put with the psychological probings of a man's mind, though psychological analysis always remained as a strong part of his fictional structure. He quickly moved over to social issues and problems, and focussed man in the grips of exploitation and

adversity - an aspect of 'truth' in life, he maintained, and the operation of evil in man's dispensation that came with the changing times and changed conditions of living. On the whole, Gopinath wrote 24 novels, and about 150 stories, many of which were collected in different collections. (The collections to be noted are *Ghasara Phula,* Flowers of Grass, 1951; *Poda Kapala,* Burnt Destiny, 1951; *Naba Badhu,* New Bride, 1952; *Chhai Alua,* Shadow and Light, 1956; *Rana Dhandol,* War Drums, 1963; *Gupta Ganga,* Hidden Ganga, 1967; *Na Manenahin,* Can't Remember Names, 1968; *Udanta Khai,* Flying Parched-Rice, 1977; *Manara Nia,* Mind's Fire, 1979; *Satapancha,* Sixes and Sevens, 1989; *Sarasajya,* The Bed of Arrows, 1992; *Chhai Alua,* (Enlarged Edition), 1992; *Tini Kala,* Three Ages, 1993; *Baghei,* Baghei, *1995 etc.)* All that cumulatively had tremendous impact on post-Independence generations in Orissa, and their intricacies and dimensions as well as their uniquely colloquial style (a strong reminder of Phakirmohan's novels and stories) chalked out ideals and trends for the post-Independence literature.

Gopinath's fictions can be divided into three main groups. The earliest group corresponds to his early service period, when he was posted in the tribal district of Koraput. The novels are, *Dadibudha* (The Ancient,1944), *Paraja* (The Parajas, 1945), *Amrutar Santan* (The Immortal Sons, 1947), *Siba Bhai* (The Brother Siba, 1955) *Apahancha* (The Unattainable,1961) and *Anam* (The (Unnamed, 1993). They deal with the tribals, such as the Parajas and the Kondhs etc. The second group deals with the people living in the towns. There are variations, and the writer speaks of different groups and categories as well as of individuals, and of high and low caste, and educated and uneducated people. But generally these novels, in theme, scope as well as in characters they portray and in attitudes, operate within the limits of the town. These are *Harijana* (The Harijanas, 1948), *Sarat Babunka Gali* (Sarat Babu's Lane, 1950), *Rahura Chhaya* (The Shadow of Rahu,

1950), *Sapana Mati* (The Dream Soils, 1954), *Danapani* (Grains of Rice and Water, 1955), *Laya Bilaya* (The Vanishing Target 1961), *Analanala* (The Destructive Fire, 1973), *Diga Dihudi* (The Blaze of Direction, 1979), and *Bundae Pani* (A Drop of Water, 1988).etc,The last group is really one novel - *Matimatala* (Clayish Earth, 1964) which is an epic of Oriya rural life. It may be noted that Gopinath's three major novels, that is, *Paraja, Amrutar Santan* and *Matimatala* deal with the tribals and the village-folk, the people who have intimate links with soil, and who portray the writer's strongest motivation and deepest understanding. Among the novels that deal with the town's environment and people in the towns.- *Harijana, Danapani. Layabilaya* and *Bundae Pani* (incidentally, an almost autobiographical novel) stand out as better than the rest. The stories too, generally follow these broad divisions, but in themselves they manifest a good deal of complications where the narrative structures range from detached, objective studies of situations to strong, powerful expressions of individual reactions and emotions. But everywhere, almost always, whether it is in fictions or in short stories, or even in the biography or autobiography, what dominates is the voice - the voice of the writer, who sees and knows, who is intensely involved and yet completely detached, who is aware of changing difficult times when the cultures clash and fade out, and whose insight goes beyond the appearance into the nakedness of reality and existence.

Gopinath's greatest and most difficult work is *Matimatala*, which he took about 10 years to complete. Never before a novel of equal magnitude and beauty was written in Oriya, and never too, one comes across a novel which was so much rooted in the soil, as this one was. Interestingly, it has the barest outline of a story, and the hero and the heroine, incidentally who have the most commonplace names, Rabi and Chhabi, are presented with a remarkable reticence, having no relationship between the two, except at a subtle mental level. The novel begins when Rabi who

has just passed his B.A., leaves his village and goes to the town to take up a job. On the way as he stays with a friend for the night who is in the Government employment he decides against taking up a job, and returns to the village. His father, a local zamindar, does not approve this. But Rabi sticks to his decision, stays in the village, and the rest of the novel deals with his continuous attempts at organizing how best the life in the villages can be like the life in a family, based on tolerance, support and mutual understanding, both in thought and deed. It is difficult to say how far he succeeds. In fact the novel ends in no resolution. But in the process the whole structure of Oriya rural life, its innateness, strength, changes and weaknesses are laid bare in a unique totality. One central situation in the novel is when Rabi confronts his father. The confrontation was on the issue of his marriage. Yet it takes the form of a clash between two generations or more correctly between two sets of values, one bound by social traditions and is averse to change, and the other inclined to change and be flexible Apparently the father remains firm, but he loses in spirit and at the end he is seen as a part of natural life where old trees decay and new roots grow up. This is how the writer sums up the situation - "The world of wild refuse had deeply and tenderly appropriated him. A dry log lay; trees stood around; an old man was lying... lying fast asleep. As if he had existed all along like this; maintaining this equation with his surroundings, as if this was the natural function of his life. And like the drops of water dripping from the spring-jar, time dripped in drops through the empty space, continued to drip and kept flowing along." In a different vein the writer speaks of Agani Ray, the village tout - "He was dark, thin and tall, and his gaunt face was smooth and was clean shaven because it was hairless from birth and his bald head was like a longish wood-apple fixed to a long iron-rod. When he stares at anyone in the face from his hollow and sunken eyes his fixed gaze seems to sear through and cling." The sketch is humorous yet it shows Agani Ray as a snake,

a devil who operates in life - a typical character portrait of Gopinath in consonant with the main trends of the book concerned. Still another aspect is the description of the flood which runs for about 150 pages in the novel and which is probably a unique such account in Indian literature. The floods brought devastation where man was seen as helpless and ugly - a naked, rotten corpse floating in water. On the other hand the floods, provided opportunity for realising finest human qualities such as compassion, tolerance and sacrifice. *Matimatala* has a complex structure and operates in many levels - beginning from apparently simple narrative and episodes to deeper range of consciousness and perception. Its real distinction lies in its profundity, in its nature of experiment on vision, and in its quality of wisdom which emerges through innumerable details of light and shade as the basic factors of existence - a fundamental viability on the face of subtle but inevitable corrosions in human affairs.

Paraja and *Amrutar Santan*, Gopinath's two great novels about the tribals, deal with the Parajas and the Kondhs respectively. Their dimensions are comparable to that of *Matimatala*. Working from the locale of a family and the village, they encompass the whole of tribal living and the dense mountainous nature of which it forms a part. In both, the human life is realized, first, in the context of tribal customs and taboos; secondly, as an organic part of nature where it is integrated as nature's natural; thirdly, in the complications of cultural-conflict where the tradition-bound tribal culture comes under the corroding impact of the new culture from the plains; and lastly, in the universals of existence independent of any local facade or restraint. Evil is present, as elsewhere in Gopinath, so too innocence and virtue, and both are equally operative, what decays on the one hand, as the inevitable victim of passing time, is nourished otherwise by man's determination, courage and strong desire to live. Thus in *Paraja* the details of tribal life emerge through the accounts of the family of Sukrujani,

in a Paraja village, set in the midst of mountains and forests ("On the way from Koraput to Laxmipur, while Laxmipur is another only five kms away, as one comes across the fearsome Dharmaduar pass, where forty hills on this side and fifty on the other stand jostling with each other, from the same Dharmaduar pass, about three kms away towards the north, there is a small village - Parasupadar, just on the waist of a mountain's descent.")., and the family's tale of woe, where the family gets completely ruined and the father and his two sons get finally arrested as murderers, is dramatically realised in the background of a luxuriant nature coupled with a sense of joy and hope seen generally in the tribe's character.

Amrutar Santan has a wider perspective, but the emphasis is still on one family and the locale one village - Miniapayu, about four thousand feet high on the mountains, of remote ancestry and past. But as it deals with the Kondhs, a more ancient and more populous group having a philosophy of their own, the novel's structure has become contemplative and philosophic. The simple and lineal features of *Paraja* are replaced by a complex organisation and shifting relationships which give a deeper and a more intense experience of life. In a way this difference is seen in Jilli and Piyu, the heroines of the two novels respectively. Whereas Jilli was selfishly interested to satisfy her own desires, Piyu could sacrifice herself for the sake of the family and for the hope of a new life to come. This is how *Amrutar Santan* ends, with reference to shifting relationship and to Piyu- "Dawn was breaking. Piyu consoled her child and got up. Disari's family was asleep. Dawn floats in with the problems of a new life. The Kondh has one word, 'I don't like you'. What remains after that ? What other interest she has in this village ? People will get up, noise will increase, under whom she would be now. A small bird has a nest , ants get their food. Can't she get a place to stay ? The last night's promise took a shape before her eyes. She could see the Miting village in

the distant hills. The walls of his father's house have fallen , many old people are dead, lost. Yet the village has a name to say one's own, the same Mahabali mountain stands as before, the same Champa stream flows as before. Venerable old Raghu Saonta will pick her up in affection, even though others don't underhand Pubuli will understand her. In the lap of earth everybody has a place, why worried. Only this birth of two days, then it changes, can't she spend this time ? Disari said correctly, no death, no sorrow. She got down, started walking quickly, continued to walk, but what's that, something breaks - new age, new world, however strong may be, her heart shivers, lips tremble, tears stream from the eyes and get into the mouth, looking at the rising sun she mutters inside her- 'Life has sweetness, no death, no sorrow'."

One of the central themes of Gopinath's novels and stories is the theme of nourishment - how is man nourished and in what manner, and what constitutes nourishment and what does not. Thus, as for him, whereas the tribals in the 'tribal novels' and the village-folk in *Matimatala* are fully nourished, the people in the 'town novels' are not, and whereas the directing tone in the former is compassion, in the latter it is sharp, biting irony. An interesting example is the novel *Layabilaya* where a couple and their grown-up daughter come from Calcutta to Puri seeking for nourishment in contact with the sea, which they got. But this was only a limited experience. They had finally to go back to the same lifelessness of the dry, drab city. Another interesting example is the story *Pimpudi* (Ants) where the protagonist empowered to stop the smuggling of rice by the tribals in the mountains, ends off by being a part of them and is swayed by an immense compassion for people who struggle to live and let others live. Similarly a unique creative document is Gopinath's own autobiography, entitled *Srotaswoti*, (The Flowing Stream, 1992, 1999, 2000), by itself a long, exciting search on the part of the writer for 'nourishment' which he got. Gopinath's novels and stories rejuvenated Oriya Literature as has

not been done before, and his influence on post-Independence Oriya literature was both seminal and highly substantial.

Sachi Routray was born at a place called Gurujang at Khurda, at a distance of about 30kms, from Bhubaneswar city. His father was an advocate in the Khurda Court and an important Congress leader of the time. Routray's student career was disturbed due to the family's involvement in politics, and his schooling was shifted from place to place, till he took his B.A. in 1939. at the age of 26. He joined as the Chief Labour Welfare Officer in Kesoram Cotton Mills; in Calcutta, in 1942, and retired as the Mill's Executive Officer in 1962, after which he returned to Cuttack and settled there. Routray's earliest poems were written around 1930,and we have seen how in the thirties and early forties he wrote poems corresponding to the poetic trends in vogue at that time. But towards the later forties a change could be seen in his poetic approach and attitudes that developed and got established in the post-Independence years. There was a change in taste and sensibility, and to some extent the pioneering books in the new mode were *Pandulipi* (The Manuscript, 1947) and *Bhanumatira* Desha (The Land of Bhanumati, 1949).

The attitudes of Oriya poets had been shifting from emotions of progressive patriotism, nationalism and social equality on the one hand, and feelings of love and nature on the other, to a contemplation of man's condition in a hostile, uncomprehending world, and Routray's poetry after Independence not only reflected the changes but also helped to formulate the new attitudes in a significant way. Thus though a large number of poems in *Pandulipi* continued Routray's earlier preoccupations with socio-political progressive attitudes and with soft, mellifluous romantic emotions, yet poems like *Pratima Nayak* and *Jyamiti* etc. could be singled out for a different type of connotation - an analysis of existence and an awareness of loss and emptiness in the context of corroding time. In *Pratima Nayak* for example, which is about a woman-

acquaintance of the poet who has lost her health and beauty through social and family compulsions during the Second World War, the poem moves quickly into a helpless pity only to be resolved ironically in the context of corroding time ("Pratima Nayak smiles/ And touch of cream on her lips/ Laughter like khaki cloth on her face/And her eyes twinkle for night/Forests move quickly on either side/And circles of stars move by silently"). In *Jyamiti* (Geometry) too, love, nature and love's desires and nature's fruitfulness are merged in each other in a metaphysical compactness only to move towards a final suggestion of loss and emptiness. Similarly in *Bhanumatira Desha* the contact between two persons, a youngman and a young woman, which is suddenly realized in a physical proximity in a remote dak bungalow in a forest-clad country, ends in uncertainty and restlessness of spirit and in a melancholic meditation about each other ("Ah, look, look/ How the golden dates of my past fade / I can't help/ I cry/ ... Is moonshine false/ A pretence of morning/ Some dates of the past/ Do they have no meaning ?.../Are they like half-sealed memory's' files ?").

Routray's major poetic volumes in the new mode got published during the fifties, sixties and the seventies. They were *Swogat* (Soliloquy, 1956), *Kabita 1962* (Poetry 1962, 1962), *Kabita 1969* (Poetry 1969, 1969), *Kabita 1971* (Poetry 1971, 1972) and *Kabita 1974* (Poetry 1974, 1975). Subsequently there have been few more volumes of poetry. Besides, the poet's theoretical discussions on Marxist poetry as well as on new poetry as related to Oriya literature, have also been collected in a few volumes. The above five volumes together contained about 270 poems, and many of them particularly, exhibited first of all, the poet's capacity to respond to new taste and understanding - an ability to move beyond romantic motivations towards an apprehension of life's realities and complications,and secondly, a keen sensitiveness to spoken, conversational rhythm, and a capacity to use colloquial idioms at ease.

Two poems to this effect can be cited in the beginning. They are *Chithi* (A Letter) from *Swogat* and *Smrutilekha* (A Memory) from *Kabita 1962.* The former has a distinct romantic trend. A letter and its probable answer have created a soft, rural environment of buzzing bees, white swans, pond, river, paddy fields and moonshine etc., where the purpose is to accept a quiet and colourful nature's beauty as a part of one's own joyful experience. In the second poem the reference to the letter remains. But it becomes a stepping stone to explore layers of experience in time and space. As the associations range from Kalidas's Dasarna to Calcutta's Chowringhee and to Australia's Melbourne, one moves from a sense of intense physical excitement ("Her touch/ The smell of her body/ And liquefaction of her pleasure") to a startling perception of tranquil happiness where Dasarna and Melbourne become one ("I remember/ Far away/ In the dense shades of ripe black-berries/ My Dasarna/ My village/ My Melbourne/My dearest city."). Similarly in another poem from *Kabita 1962*, entitled *Aswina (1958*), the primary level is one of nature's beauty with reference to the externals of Aswina or the autumn season. At the second level Aswina becomes like Keats's autumn, rich and fruitful, that sustains, like a mother sustaining the life of a child. Still at another level - a deeper level, it merges with the poet's consciousness from where joy and happiness evolve - "My love, my rivers, my crops, my power, my birds/ Oh, new season, come on a new path, in the saffron address of my soul". Therefore, when at last the poet invites Aswina, it is because first, it is a fine season, secondly, it is like a dear friend coming back, but thirdly, it is the perception of an unprecedented pleasure, where small things are forgotten and what dominates the poet's soul is a warm, bright joy away from a mental set-up of darkness - "Oh, Aswina, please come, please sit happily in the arm-chair on the veranda/ In colourful croton leaves or in the shades of creepers, /Or on river banks/ Aswina please come, please enter

into the house of pleasure and perception/ The echoes are in white clouds, white swans and in white jasmine flowers".

Hairpin (Hairpin) and *Lal Skutar* (Red Scooter) from *Kabita 1971* are two other good examples. Each has a number of dimensions. 'Hairpin' at one level is the loss of a lady's hairpin (along with two silver safetypins), and a search is made everywhere in the house to find that out but it did not succeed ("I can't find it/ Where is your hairpin ?"). The search slowly extends to other areas, such as, distant hotels, river banks and sea beaches, the places the protagonist might have visited along with the lady. That is, a common family situation now becomes a part of an extended experience ("Searched far and near/ Many years ago and many years hence/ On river-banks on sea-beaches/ Daily, in hotels.") But the search does not end there.It goes over to completely different areas, less substantial and countable, such as, 'layers of darkness', in the 'intensity of moonshine' and 'climbing steps of time'. Thus slowly the search for the hairpin becomes marginal and what comes to the fore is the search for a relationship - relationship between the protagonist and the lady. Finally, the hairpin becomes the symbol of youthful life ("Your tresses, beautiful and compact/ And the domes of your breast") and its loss leads to a shocking vision of nakedness, emptiness and death. Thus beginning from an ordinary situation what has been organised in the poem relates to serious aspects of desire and relationship.

In *Lal Skutar* the poem begins with the speed of the scooter, and from the beginning there are feelings of eagerness and fear, not normal with a scooter-rider who generally runs the scooter calmly and regulates the speed. Here the scooter runs at its own speed, and the rider has no control over it. That is why, the feelings of fear and worriness, that any untoward event may happen anytime, and the protagonist and the lady who rides along with him, have clung to each other so that they would not be separated

if anything happens. What is to be noted is that from the beginning of the poem, one becomes aware of suggestions more than the routine associations of a scooter, almost at the level of a symbolic action, where the scooter 'races headlong over emptiness, towards a bottomless abyss', where all things sink and die ("The red scooter races in emptiness/ Hold me tight from the back/ Hold me before we fall into the abyss/ Death below and eternal forgetfulness/.... All drown there, all expansion..."). This is one aspect of the poem's meaning where the movement of the scooter becomes symptomatic of the time's movement, which nobody can control, and which victimizes all. Thus the scooter's movement becomes an occasion to make the reader conscious of the time's corroding effect. The second aspect takes from here - in countering the power of time. This is done, first, by taking recourse to love, in the love-relationship between the lover and the lady, love across time, and secondly, in time, in the context of social-relationship, in such scooter-related work as going on a picnic etc. ("There are food and drinks/ And packets of sandwiches/ And a tourist map/ And a list of inns.). But that is not the end of it.There is still another level of perception. Differently, the movement is from non-being to being, from that which is less vital, to that else which is more vital, and the point of annihilation becomes the final point of realization ("The sound rises from emptiness/ And the scooter races from non-being to being/ Tangentially/ Under the blue cities."). Still differently, probably there is no movement, the scooter never moves. ("Probably it has never moved/ Across the time's river"). Yet the existence involves action, and action leads to more action and finally to the final point of annihilation to where the protagonist is eager to come. Thus that which begins from the movement of a familiar scooter, slowly goes over to deeper layers of perception, to an analysis of being and non-being, to be resolved finally in the intimacy of an unfamiliar realization.

Few more poems which the poet wrote after 1950, may be cited here. They are *Eka Bandhabira Janmadinare* (On the Occasion of a Lady-Friend's Birthday) and *Uttara Tirisa* (Past Thirty) from *Swogat; Antarala* (Concealment) and *Khara* (The Sun's Heat) from *Kabita 1962*; *Nadiku Eka Daraja* (A Door to the River) from *Kabita 1989,*; *Megha* (Cloud) from *Kabita 1971* and *Sabari* (The Sabar-Woman) from *Kabita 1974*. In each of these poems various disparate elements merge in a metaphysical compactness to move finally to suggestions of loss and emptiness. The poems have structural complications and beginning from a physical or mundane level the motivations move to mental and spiritual ones. *Sabari* provides a good, representative example, where the environment of Sabari's pair of eyes get an extension all over the universe ("In all material, living universe/ In forests and blue skies/ I remember only two eyes/ And nothing else/ Nothing else I can see" and in a mysterious metaphysical perception the poet's insight turns on himself and to an analysis of his own mind - an attempt to identify oneself and one's own existence. In fact in the poems that Routray wrote after 1950 this has been the main trend - an awareness of one's own predicament in an unfamiliar and. uncomprehending world.

Routray's poetry is like a rich crop, and its abundance across decades is a point to note. Whether it is in romanticism or left-oriented 'progressivism' or in metaphysical compactness related to contemporary existence, it has always shown a keen awareness, both in language and in imagination. He introduced free verse in Oriya and achieved a significant integration between the spoken and written language, and between the poetic and conversational rhythm. His alertness for the language and his capacity to introduce newer and fresher images again and again, brought a startling livingness to Oriya poetry in the forties and fifties. His has been a major voice, and his poetry has contributed, as pointed out earlier, very importantly to the rich mosaic of Oriya

poetry after Independence.

Manoranjan Das was born at Jharkata Patna, about 10 kms from Cuttack city, towards south-east, inside an extended landmass called Baisimauja, created by the bifurcation of the river Kathajodi below Cuttack. But most of his young days were spent at Kujang, near Paradwipa (Paradeep) and sea, where his father worked as an engineer. The whole area was sparsely populated, full of wild coastal vegetation, and had a fantastic though awesome beauty. Manoranjan's childhood memories never left him and they recurred in his writings again and again. Subsequently he went over to Cuttack, finished his studies from Utkal University in 1946, drifted from job to job, including a stint at Cuttack Bar as a pleader, joined All India Radio in 1958 as a Producer of Drama, and retired from AIR as Producer Emeritus in 1987. In between, at the request of the Government of Orissa, he worked as the Secretary of State Akademies (Sahitya, Sangeet Natak and Lalitkala) for about 8 years. He is currently settled in Cuttack. As has been noted, Manoranjan confined himself to one genre, that is, drama. His earliest dramas were written in the early forties and his latest, so far, in 1985. In between he wrote a total 16 full-length dramas, about 35 one-act plays, organised a number of amateur theatrical groups, including *Srujani* the most famous of all (1965-70), produced innumerable plays, 2 films, equally innumerable dance and music recitals, and talked everywhere in Orissa on drama, art and culture. In short, like Gopinath in novel, Sachi Routray in poetry, Manoranjan grew to be a legend in drama as more and more of his plays were produced and captured the imagination of his audience. In his advanced years he has written his autobiography (1999), entitled *Smruti Samlap* (Dialogues in Memory), a remarkable document of drama and growth of drama in Orissa, in the 50 years since Independence.

Manoranjan's dramas can be grouped in a few phases chronologically. The first phase is from 1943 to 1951, 9 years,

from the time when he was 22 till he became 30 and the dramas that he wrote were seven, such *as Jauban* (The Youth, 1943), his first play, *Janmamati* (Motherland, 1944), *August Na* (August 9, 1946), *Baxi Jagabandhu* (Baxi Jagabandhu, 1949), *Agami* (Oncoming, 1949) and *Abarodha* (The Seize, 1951.) That was the time immediately before and after Independence - the time of high emotions and hopes on the one hand, and the equally strong disillusionment that quickly set in. The plays responded and grew out of the changes that took place in the contemporary mindset. In a sense they were pioneering plays, because never before in Oriya contemporary political themes were seized upon as dramatic material with such force, determination and point of view, and never before the motivations in Oriya drama tended to understand the contemporary life through analysis of mental attitudes and social and political ideas. The plays among themselves present a whole gamut of political development beginning with the ambitious visions of *August Na*, to the loss of confidence, helplessness and political failures of *Abarodha*. Since *August Na* had a background in the 'Quit India' movement of 1942, it naturally goes over to assert revolt and revolution and hopes for a free India. The motivation of the play was provided at the end by Professor Das, the mentor and a leading character - the outcome of 'Quit India' movement, and faith in future. ("No body can take away their rights of birth, no amount of torture and exploitation. On the alter of democracy, you will see, Amar, the free offerings of a free nation"). But the motivation changed as we move over to *Abarodh*, the story of greed and selfishness of power-hungry men; the buoyant hope was replaced by a keen sense of distress and despondency. Thus Sudhansu - "There is now distress everywhere - cry for clothes, food. Darkness, darkness everywhere, and death-dance of exploitation." And Phalguni - "I fear the lack of education - the moral degradation." And Sumitra - "The country that has no food, no clothes, no happiness, no health, no comfort, is that a

country ? It has no life." *Abarodh*'s vision is one of complete darkness and distress, an awareness how corroding powers dominate and distort the factors of life, and how personal honesty and integrity are cut into pieces by political chicanery and smallness. What is to be noted is that though the period was a limited one (9 years, from 1943 to 1951), Manoranjan's dramatic motivations and attitudes went through a significant change from emotions of youthful love and attractions of 'innocence' and 'simplicity' of the village as against complications of the town as seen in his earliest plays such as *Jauban* and *Janmamati*, towards high nationalistic hopes, and final awareness of things getting lost and disintegrated. In this connection a good representative play was *Baxi Jagabandhu* (which incidentally remains as a popular play even today), the story of an Oriya chieftain who rose in revolt against the British in the second decade of the 19th century (popularly known as 'Paik Revolution', probably first such mass-revolution for freedom in the whole of India), where in a historical-cum-patriotic context both the heroic hopes and stark reality of the defeated have been portrayed - in a sense a play suggestive of an atmosphere of political disillusionment which Das as a leftist shared with many of his friends at that time.

The second phase of drama-writing for Manoranjan began about 15 years after, and continued for about 13 years from 1966 till 1979. The dramas were *Banahansi* (The Wild Swan,1966), *Aranya Fasal* (The Wild Harvest, 1969), *Amrutasya Putra* (The Immortal Sons, 1970), *Kathaghoda* (The Wooden Horse, 1972), *Urmi* (The Waves, 1973), *Sabdalipi* (The Word-Script,1975) and *Klanta Prajapati* (The Tired Butterfly,1979).The time was about 20 years after Independence, when significant changes had taken place in total dispensation - social, political and mental. This is a different group of plays in comparison to the first group. The earlier social or political motivations are now replaced, and instead attention is now fixed on the labyrinth of human predicament in

modern times. Among the plays themselves one can also notice a subtle distinction. Plays such as *Banahansi*, *Amrutasya Putra* and *Urmi* etc., mainly deal with the complete motivations of man-woman relationship. Particularly,as the dramatist analyses the complications of this relationship, feelings of pain, agony and distress come to dominate the individual's existence. But in other plays the perception has moved beyond the individual's pain and agony towards man's general discomfort and distress - a mindset where lack of communication, an incapacity to understand each other and even to understand oneself, and the unsuccess to understand one's own life and the life's environment dominate. Three most powerful plays of this group, which also portray ascending steps in poetic understanding and vision are *Aranya Fasal*, *Kathaghoda* and *Sabdalipi*. In many respects they are unique in Oriya (for example in style, exposition etc.). But together they constitute the most important dramatic expression in Oriya of the modern sensibility of alienation and nonexistence.

In *Aranya Fasal* five persons (three men and two women) have come to a remote dak-bungalow in the midst of a jungle on a week-end picnic. They are all city-bred and socially known to each other. They stay in the bungalow for two days and instead of achieving a deepening intimacy they slowly realize that they have never known each other enough, and there had never been any communication among them. The play deals with loss of communication, and the characters get bogged down in themselves. Their conversation is reduced to monosyllables, and they talk only to avoid each other. Going in search of big games they end up ironically in killing the pet-goat of the caretaker, and at the end, one of them attempts to kill himself in contempt of the intimacy which they were trying to assume among themselves. It is a symbolic play with ironical overtones - irony at the futile attempts to combine and communicate. In *Kathaghoda* there are four characters, two men and two women, and one director who

acts as the chorus and participates in the action. The characters are casually looking for a 'shelter', and as the play proceeds the rough edges of the characters wear off and the four characters slowly melt into two, a man and a woman, and ultimately into one, where the man-woman distinction vanishes. The play deals with a search - search for an identity, or more particularly two counter-aspects of identity - to inflict pain on the one hand and to tolerate pain on the other; and to lead a painful life on the one hand and to be released from that on the other. Thus the single character to which all the characters are reduced at the end, has no characteristic existence, it is only a mental perception - the feelings of circling in the circles of pain ("Arun - 'We do not know what is wrong'/ Deepa - 'We do not know what is right'/ Arun -'We do not know what is fulfilment'/ Deepa - 'We do not know what is liberation'/ Arun - 'The whirl inside'/ Deepa- 'We have to whirl around'/ Arun - 'The movement inside'/ Deepa - 'The existence inside'/Arun - 'Pain inside'/ Deepa - 'Agony inside"). *Kathaghoda* like *Aranya Fasal* earlier, is a symbolic play with ironical overtones - the symbol is provided by the wooden-horse of the title which aspires for both speed and life but achieves neither.

In *Sabdalipi* the perception of life is deepest, almost philosophical, There are six characters, five men and one woman with the director (convener), continually shaping and reshaping the action to give an impression all the time that whatever is happening is all illusion. Whether at the beginning, the middle, or at the end, we do not know where we stand, though all the time the normal dramatic action continues (of characters communicating with each other, making love, getting angry, leaving their houses or recollecting their past etc.). We immediately become conscious of something like a whirlwind in which all the five men circle round the woman, and only slowly, but with increasing intensity we become aware of another greater whirlwind in which all of

them are caught, and which provides no fixed point anywhere, and where such segments of time, like life and death, become meaningless. The play moves from a point of existence to nonexistence, and comprehends time as a flux where continually innumerable items of life bubble up only to vanish immediately after. The end of the play shows this most dramatically where the woman, called Reeta, who was supposed to have been killed earlier, comes back to life once again, only to renew her actions as before - "Convener - 'Don't break down ... Don't be worried ... Have patience.'/ All - 'What then..'/Convener- 'The whirligig, of words..'/All - 'Yes..'/ Convener - 'I am.. I myself am the ocean of words../ I am the creator... I create, and you all follow me..'/ All - 'Yes..'/ Convener - 'Then why have the sorrow ?'/ All - 'Reeta..our Reeta..'/ Convener - 'I am the creator.. I will give her life in a new creation. with new words, with new spirit of life'..". The plays of Manoranjan's second phase are not just analyses of mental set up. They are more than that. They show a deep perception of life and life's structure, and move beyond the individual's distress or complicated relationship towards a search of the soul, and an attempt to understand one's identity in the midst of flux and uncertainty.

In fact in Manoranjan's two subsequent plays, *Bitarkita Aparanha* (Afternoon Cogitations,1930) and *Nandika Kesari* (Nandika Kesari,1984), the playwright's attention shifted from sounding the depth of one's own psyche in an alienated world, to a consideration of sustaining values in a crumbling existence - a search for peace, compassion and tolerance. This is apparent in *Bitarkita Aparanha* which portrays three generations, not so much as steps in a time-scale, but as a conflict of attitudes. Thus whereas the grandfather sticks to his idol of God, and the father to his idol of Mammon, the grandson sticks to nothing - only to the ashes of the burning ground, and at the end the slokas from the Gita are juxtaposed with absurd sounds which are supposed to be a song

from the youngsters. The same exploration continues in *Nandika Kesari* too. The story relates to the war for power and possession in a historical frame in the 12th century Orissa - the story of a princess who in her bid to win the favours of love from her father's enemy by betraying her father's secrets of strength, failed in her purpose and in the process killed herself. Manoranjan kept the outline of the story and the sequence of events, but changed the motivation and purpose of action, and introduced new characters and attitudes to have a new frame.In his interpretation Nandika, the princess, sacrificed her life as a challenge to man's greed and propensity to devastation, in favour of peace and tranquillity, and the 12th century incident transcended its time to symbolically become an encounter between man's goodness and his evil instincts, and to consider to what extent goodness and grace can be appropriate responses to modern man's conditions of living. Additionally, in incorporating Oriya folk-opera structure (including such aspects as dance, music, and audience-participation etc.) in *Nandika Kesari* Manoranjan gave new dimensions to Oriya drama, and provided again a much-needed new leadership to dramatic talents.

In Oriya drama, particularly in post-Independence Oriya drama, Manoranjan has been the most important dramatist - a leader who had the capacity to continually respond to the changes in taste and sensibility, and had the ability to formulate that in significant dramatic form. His single-minded devotion to drama, a continuous involvement for more than 60 years, is amazing. His creative capacity, intensity of perception, and depth of understanding together created a great viability for Oriya drama after Independence and provided it with necessary strength and dimension to grow.

Surendra Mohanty was born in the village. Purusottampur, under Salepur Police Station in the Cuttack district. He had his education in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and took to both

journalism and politics as his career. He was the editor of daily newspapers, such as *Ganatantra*, *Kalinga* and *Sambad*, at different times and became a Member of Pariliament (Both Loksabha and Rajyasabha) for a number of years. His writing was multifaceted, and beginning with stories in the early forties, he at the same time went over to other genres, such as novel, drama, essays, belles-lettres, criticism, travelogue, features on 'topical' subjects, and biography and autobiography, and by sixties was established as a powerful writer both as an inspiration and a model for the younger writers. "My stories take off from instinct", he once wrote, "but the strongest fibers are provided by reason and emotion, and the issues that guide me range from social and political to spiritual at the end".

Though Surendra tried many genres, it was specially in three genres that he achieved special distinction. They were novel, short story and biography. His novels were 13 in number, and starting from *College Boy* (1947) and *Badhu O Priya* (The Bride and the Beloved, 1948), through *Andha Diganta* (The Blind Horizon, 1964), *Nila Saila* (The Blue Hill, 1968) and *Krushna Benire Sandhya* (The Evening in the Tresses of Krishna River, 1985) etc. ended in *Phatamati* (The Broken Earth, 1988), his last novel. Similarly his story collections also numbered 13. These were, *Mahanagarira Ratri* (The Night of the Metropolis, 1950), *Krushnachuda* (The Gul Mohar, 1951), *Sabujapatra O Dhusar Golap* (The Green Leaf and the Gray Rose, 1958), *Maralara Mrutu* (The Death of the Swan, 1962), *Mahanirvan* (The Great End, 1973), *Jadubansa O Anyanya Galpa* (The Jadu Dynasty and Other Stories, 1983) and *Rajdhani O Anyanya Galpa* (The Capital and Other Stories, 1985) etc. His biography was in fact a fictional biography in two volumes, entitled *Satabdhira Surya*. (The Sun of the Century, 1970) and *Kulabrudha* (The Elder, 1977) on Madhusudan Das, the great leader. Among his other books, he wrote 7 books of literary criticism, including two perceptive critical

treatises on Phakirmohan Senapati and three books on the evolution of Oriya literature. Then he had a travel-account, entitled *Peking Diary* (1959), an account of his visit to China as an M.P., and an autobiography, entitled *Patha O Pruthibi* (The Road and the Earth, 1985).

Surendra's early novels such as *College Boy* and *Badhu O Priya,* written at a young age in his early twenties, also carried young emotions related to love, union, separation etc. along with desires to adopt conscientious and moralistic manners, more or less at par with love-related novels that were being written at that time. His first serious novel came about 20 years after, when he had been established as a fine story-writer, in his early forties. It was *Andha Diganta*, soon after follwed by *Nila Saila,* both of which established him as a major novelist of the time with a new significance for Oriya literature. *Andha Diganta* deals with political developments in India between 1921 and 1952 - the initial enthusiastic spirit of the freedom movement, the subsequent rise and fall of the hopes for freedom in the twenties and thirties, the Independence, and its immediate aftermath. That is one aspect. The other aspect is an analysis, how the human spirit got buoyed up by the vision of freedom, but slowly shrank due to motivated action by ambitious, unscrupulous people who could bargain all the benefits of Independence to further their own selfish ends. The protagonist is one Nidhi Das, a simple, honest villager, who participated in the freedom-struggle with high hopes and conviction and sacrificed whatever he had. But when the Independence came it was not what he had dreamt of personally, it became to him an extremely sorrowful conclusion - "Leave aside treatment due to dryness, there was nobody there to put a drop of water in his mouth. The news of Nidhi Das's death vanished like a bubble in the bottomless ocean of anonymities." (p.2). But Nidhi Das's vision was the basic vision of the writer- "Unless new men come, a new society is built, how can the Swaraj come. Sure, if the country

becomes free, independence will come, but if the man is not free, how can the Swaraj come ?" (p.90). Elsewhere this is repeated and elaborated- "Ah ! that storm disintegrated somewhere. He had thought of Swaraj like a summer blast, that would have blown all selfish compromise, all exploitation-based tradition, all positions, injustice and disgrace in one puff and would have left everything clean. He had dreamt of Swaraj like an overflowing flood. The British was only impediment against that storm and flood. The impediment was removed, but the storm also vanished somewhere, the flood dried up (p.291).

In *Andha Diganta* the protagonist lost his moorings and was broken up by the circumstances. Almost a similar dejection assailed the writer in *Nila Saila.* The story was shifted from modern times to 18th century Orissa, and the protagonist was the local king of Khurda who was associated with Lord Jagannath of Puri. The king had to fight for his position against the ruling Muslims, was defeated, and was finally converted into Islam. But the king's devotion and association with the Lord did not cease, and the novel narrates the king's continuous attempts against immense odds to establish, first of all his own moorings, secondly, the sanctity of the Lord against the enemy's manouverings, and thirdly, to uphold the pride of the Oriyas as a nation in the midst of severely crumbling circumstances. Nidhi Das's dejection is seen as actutely in king Ramachandra Dev, the protagonist of *Nila Saila,* with the difference that whereas in the former there is not even a chink of light, the latter is marked with hope, courage and conviction that in the final counting things are not as lost as they appear to be. No doubt the strength is related to the divine dimension that the novel provides, but it also highlights man's courage and strength that holds its own and refuses to bow down. On the whole, the novel is full of details, both recreation of historical factors and innumerable social situations of a remote time more than 200 years ago, as well as the spirit of history, a nation's grinding contact with the invaders. The

sense of loss and fear with which the novel begins ("All around looked ashy in a pale, gray light. Not a single pilgrim could be seen on the road. Even the noise of birds could not be heard in the trees on both the sides of the road. All around was a ghastly, unnatural silence,") haunts throughout the book. Yet that which also simultaneously emerges is a sense of strength and courage, the nations's pride and unity with relation to Lord Jagannath's Car Festival - "All the forward pride of Raja Aminchand had already been lost in that atmosphere... He looked helplessly at the Lord's ascent to the Chariot, and more helplessly he realized that the Lord was not just a deity, he was the greatest symbol of the nation's unity, strength and glory. He was the true Lord of Orissa, Orissa's King was only his servant." (p,241). *Nila Saila* was Surendra's most popular novel, and one of the most popular novels in Oriya language.

Phatamati, the third major novel, written about 24 years after *Andha Diganta,* and 20 years after *Nila Saila,* continues the basic preoccupations of the earlier two novels - sense of loss and uncertainty, of broken dreams, of all round social and moral disintegration, with the difference that the content in the present novel was the social change in Orissa, particularly in the rural areas, in the sixties and seventies. The protagonist was Hrushikesh, a retired Headmaster, who after his retirement from service left the distressing environment of the town and came over to his village to have a peaceful life in a tranquil, congenial situation. But in no time his dreams were grounded. He found himself a victim of village-politics, abominable lowness and caste division - a grinding, disintegrating social change promoted by political unscrupulousness and chicanery. Hrushikesh of course did not leave the village. He decided to stay in the village and thought of reforming the village through his selfless action, however frail that thought might have been. But the novel as a whole was a

fearful social document and revealed a much more tragic and disconcerting change in the social structure than what had been seen in *Andha Diganta.*

The other area in which Surendra equally excelled was short story. Beginning from later forties in a period of about 40/45 years he wrote more than 150 stories, the heaviest concentration being in the fifties and sixties, and like Gopinath's stories they struck new trends and had profound influence on the story writers of post-Independence generation. His early stories had a romantic strain, but subsequently his stories took to stark, naked realism that provided the basis for an insight into the modern man's predicament - the predicament of a lonely, alienated existence and the futile attempts to establish oneself against the impact of crumbling values and changing times. A good example is *Baraju Sendha Ghai* (The Baraju Sendha Breach, 1959), which refers to the situation of death, destruction and suffering created because of sudden breach in the embankment of a river in flood, finally becomes the tale of a lonely poor school teacher, who rose to face the calamity when the occasion demanded but was callously forgotten when the calamity was over and came to a situation more fearful than the flood - situation of complete helplessness and loneliness.- "Hari Master opened his eyes in agony, looked around as if searching for some one. At a distance, across the Baraju Sendha Breach, the western sky was washed with a colourful sunset. The wind fanned the autumn flowers on the Karali embankment and the colour of molten gold slowly faded over the leaves of the banyan tree." Even in an earlier story, *Nayanpur Express* (published 1950), the initial jubilation of a political conspirator who had arranged the derailment and destruction of an Express train over a bridge, came to a sudden tragic realization that the same train was also carrying his wife and little daughter. Similarly, in another story, entitled *Nisanga Akash* (Lonely Sky),

written later (1963) an awareness of time's movement joined with passing age and ended for the protagonist in an acute sense of helplessness and loneliness, and the realization that all attempts to escape from the life's agony was futile - "The red light of the station's signal near the Mahapurush mound could be seen from a distance. The world from where I was running away in disguise to save myself, as if stood in front of me opening the blood-red eyes of a demon... At a distance at the back, two dead branches of a stunted tree apeared in pale moonlight like a woman with dishevelled hair running after me with two eager arms spread out to appropriate me under her clothes." In fact Surendra's keen observation of the psychology of people, a capacity not only to portray a character, but at the same time to assess the character's attitude and mentality, and more particularly to realize the intensity of an intimate moment inherent in the character, along with a strong socio-political consciousness, provided a powerful dimension to Oriya short story and to Oriya creative writing in general after Independence.

His two-volume biography on Madhusudan Das, was a landmark work in that genre and was extremely popular. It showed the great leader as a vibrating living personality both in his frailties and greatness, and at the same time provided an extraordinary insight into the fast changing contemporary social conditions in the later part of the 19th and early part of the 20th century. We have already made a reference to Surendra's ability as a literary critic. He also did pioneering work in journalistic feature-writing, and his book to that effect, entitled *Sesha Stambha* (Last Column) is a much acclaimed book. A versatile man of genius, Surendra Mohanty, along with Gopinath Mohanty, Sachi Rautray, and Manoranjan Das provided a solid foundation on which a richly coloured and multi-toned Oriya literature after Independence could grow up.

Elders

Apart from the 'Founders' we have noted, there were other writers too, who provided a link between the pre-Independece and post-Independence days. The more important among them were, Godabaris Mahapatra poet, Kanhu Charan Mohanty novelist, Radhamohan Gadanayak poet, Anant Pattanaik poet, Nityananda Mahapatra novelist, Laxmidhar Nayak novelist, Gopal Chhotray (1916-2002) dramatist, Ramchandra Mishra (1921-1992) dramatist, and Bhanja Kishor Pattanaik (1922-2001) dramatist. They all had earlier beginnings, Yet it was only after Independence that they achieved success and popularity and were accepted as major figures who contributed substantially to the growth of new literature.

Godabaris Mahapatra's poetic tenor changed after Independence. What was seen in his stories earlier, a strong social consciousness, particularly of social change, came over to his poetry, and instead of writing poetry in the mellifluous traditional way, on patriotic sentiments and feelings for nature and rural life, he developed a biting socio and socio-political attitude towards contemporary men and manners. In fact, it was a strong satirical dimension that he introduced into Oriya literature, in a way a revival of Radhanath's *Darbar*-tradition, but fresher, livelier, sharper and more pungent, as he picked up contemporary situations, incidents and individuals as his target, and invariably rinsed his satire with humour, wit and irony, and applied all that with a devastating effect. The related poetic volumes were, *He Mora Kalam* (Oh, My Pen, 1951) *Handisalare Biplab* (Revolution in the Kitchen, 1952), *Kanta O Phula* (Flower and Thorn, 1958) and *Banka O Sidha* (The Straight and the Crooked, 1964). Together these volumes contain hundreds of short poems and exhibit the poet's awareness related to many aspects of contemporary life-politics, social change, female education, urbanization, developmental projects, corruption in high places, prohibition, unification of Oriya speaking

tracts as well as on the abject life of low-paid employees and poor farmers etc. A few quotations would be apt. Thus as in *Garibar Durga Staba* (A Poor Man's Prayer to Goddess Durga) the poet regrets, with a tongue in the cheek attitude, how Goddess Durga who visits the earth once a year in October has become like a Minister, who is fond of new cars, placates rich people, and stays away from commonmen - "Oh, Mother ! you came on a visit and returned yesterday/What was your 'programme' please, let me know/Drums sounded in the towns/Streets crowded by rich men/ I wonder, did you really change like a Minister/Did you really come in a new motor car." Or in a poem entitled *Tume O Ame* (You and We) the touch of irony at the difference of two groups of people, haves and havenots- "What nonsense you speak/Always it's not available, that's not available/ There's always a crowd at our doors/Somebody says have this ghee/Somebody else says have this oil.." Or, in a poem entitled *Uttara* (Answer) the agony and anger in a tone of apparent relaxation and implied satire, in reply to the letter of an unknown person on the occasion of Govt. of India's refusal to consider Orissa's just claim for delimitation on the basis of language, in 1956- "I read your letter/Again and again/ Many times/As I read I ask the question/Who may you be ?/ Are you the oncoming man of my nation/Of tomorrow's ?/Or he or she/The spirit of this earth / Or skeleton under this Barabati/ Dreaming ?/How the lamp of life flickers in hope and faith." Or, in a different mood, with a touch of irony no doubt, but with a free, easy humour about a modern woman :

A pair of restless eyes
And a pair of gogles,
A soft red lip
And an empty neck,
Two feet carry a pair of colourful slippers,
A small, thin saree like a mirror,
Two lotus like arms half-clothed,

Silk like tresses that deceive every heart-

Combine these, get a woman of the town.

An interesting and representative poem in this connection, is a poem entitled *Se Keṫe Dura* ? (How Far is That ?). It is written in an apparently relaxed mood with a structure of humour and flowing rhythm. But what is implied is a satire on men's manners, morals and character, to what extent they change depending on expediency. The context relates to a routine and mundane affair, the change of leadership in the Congress Party in Orissa, in the mid-term election in 1961, where Biju Pattanaik as the new leader, replaced Harekrushna Mahatab, as Orissa's Chief Minister. The references are how people in pursuit of power and pelf moved away from Mahatab's place (Biharibag) to Pattanaik's place (Tulsipur) in the same Cuttack city, a few kilometers away-

The river on this side is dry
The boats move in water on the other side
The flowers drop off from this tree
The other tree sprouts with blossoms
Would you please say, my brother,
How far is that ?
From Biharibag to Tulsipur ?

....

The temple on this side is locked
The temple on the other side admits all
All the beggars and devotees of this side
Celebrating the newly-born on the other side.
Would you please say, my brother,
How far is that ?
From Biharibag to Tulsipur ?

....

Oh, you travellers, don't delay
Come, get together, reap benefits.
Oh tell me, my brother

How far is that ?

From Biharibag to Tulsipur ?

Taking up apparently routine and common socio and socio-political issues Mahapatra achieved a grinding tone of satire and analysis, which was rarely done by other writers.

Kanhucharan Mohanty's literary career had begun from the thirties when his early novels such as *Baliraja* and *Ha Anna* were published and made a mark. We have seen how *Ha Anna* dealt with a rare subject matter, that is the devastating famine of 1866. By Independence Kanhucharan had written a number of novels and had been established as a substantial novelist. Kanhucharan's involvement with novel continued throughout his career (his last novel was written about 1984), a total of about 60 novels, in a period of about 60 years, and in a way created a strong taste for novel among the reading public, and earned a good deal of respect as an elder novelist (He was chosen as a Fellow of the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, the second to be so chosen from Orissa, after Kalindi Charan Panigrahi). Kanhucharan experimented with different themes, such as social, historical, psychological and even with the evolution of mankind. But the main area in which he frequently wrote about, was social - social issues and problems, and the structure of social realism, where the pivotal attention was given to family, and man-woman relationship. particularly to women, who often face innumerable social and familial hurdles and are often seen at the receiving end in the society. Kanhucharan wrote in an easy, narrative style, in a flowing felicitous language, and coupled with that was his sense of sympathy, compassion, and tolerant tone in providing realistic portraits of the society before and after Independence. All that greatly appealed to the middle-class sentiment.

Sasti (The Punishment, written on the eve of Independence, 1946), was one of Kanhucharan's best novels, and shows many of his features in bold relief. Its background is that of *Ha Anna* - the

1866 famine. But that is only the beginning. It grows beyond that to consider how best man-woman relationship can be sustained and can be fruitful additive to life's problems. The social issues tackled are many, such as love, sacrifice, widow remarriage and caste restrictions, and the dreams of a casteless society etc., but they come as structural elements and generally strengthen the attitudes and motivation. The story relates to the relationship between a youngman (Sanei) and a young woman (Dhobi), and how their relationship was first broken up by false family pride and the onslaught of famine, and secondly, by stiff social obstructions and false ideas of individual purity and prestige. In the final reckoning both the youngman and the woman were 'punished'. The former, with his ideas of a 'classless society', gone wry, had to leave the village as a destitute, and the latter, who had earlier become a widow, had to accept a life of ostracism, drudgery and dejection. Dhobi's statement sums up the whole situation (P.128) - "As a river's water sweeps away uncontrollably when an embankment is breached, similarly at Sanei's one word all the pent-up emotion in Dhobi's heart rushed out restlessly - 'Sanei bhai, I have done wrong to you. Pardon me. There is no more happiness in my life which is already burnt. I am a widow. The society, the religion, the caste, and the fear of all the canards told by people, are like layers of a net around me. They imprison me. However I try I can't wriggle out. I fry in agony, in sorrow. I can't cut off my shackles. Nobody can help me...".

Jhanja (The Storm, 1950) and *Ka* (The Shadow, 1955), two other good and popular novels of Kanhucharan continue *Sasti's* basic theme, that is, intensity of man-woman relationship and a concern for the woman's joys and sufferings, and compassion for the woman's helplessness on the face of strong social restrictions and taboos. Khyanaprava in *Jhanja* and Nandika in *Ka* suffer differently, one from the jealousy of a blind husband, the other from the indifference of a husband due to her barrenness. Both try

to adjust and get released from their predicament, one in highly acclaimed welfare activities, the other in a highly tolerant attitude towards her husband to the extent of getting a second wife for him. But for both, the end was futility and inconsequence. In fact, Kanhucharan's forte in his novels is a portrayal of strong emotion in a frame of man-woman relationship, particularly of love, and adjustment on the face of social obstructions. Joys and suffering, more of the latter than the former, as well as sympathy and compassion dominate his novels structurally, and provide their strongest appeal to the readers. A few other well-known novels of Kanhucharan may be noted. The are, *Nispati* (Decision), *Tunda Baida* (The Mouth-Drum), *Adekhahata* (The Unseen Hand), and *Parakiya* (Extra Marital) etc. before Independence, and *Sarbari* (The Darkness), *Bajrabahu* (The Iron Fisted), *Tamasa Tire* (On the Bank of Tamasa) and *Dheudheuka* (Waves and Waves) etc. after Independence, in the fifties and sixties.

We have seen how Radhamohan Gadanayak's poems written in the thirties and forties conformed to the prevailing romantic mode in which he came to be accepted as an important poet. All such poems of his were first collected in *Kavya Nayika* and then to some extent in *Mausumi*. But at the same time he had also developed another strain, which was in a way a continuation of what Godabaris Mishra had done earlier in his Satyabadi days, in a book like *Alekhika*. The trend was to reminisce - to remember and write about the past people, taken from local tales, fables and history, the purpose being to highlight the personalities both in their strength and sorrow and to re-live the past situations once again. The form was ballad or narrative story-telling structure and they continued as before the poet's essential strength as related to rhyming and lyricism. The earlier book in this connection, containing 16 poems was *Utkalika*, and two other books that followed immediately after Independence, *Smaranika* and *Mausumi*, that together contained 17 such poems. The subsequent

volumes where this trend could be seriously noted were *Dhusar Bhumika* (Gray Introduction, 1960) and *Samukar Swapna* (The Dreams of Sea Shell, 1961), that had together 24 pieces, Thus pieces related to Gandhi, Nanak, Dayananda etc. joined with such other pieces related to Orissa's well known artists, writers and leaders such as B. Burma, Laxmikant Mahapatra, Bhima Bhoi, Gopabandhu Das and Gopabandhu Choudhury etc. and folk-tales from Gujurat, Rajsthan, Bengal and Uzbekistan etc. A good example is *Jasma*, a story taken from Kathiawad folk-lore, about a beautiful woman of an earth-digging community, who rejected the immoral advances of the king and preferred to sacrifice her life. The story told racily in rhyme, communicates intense feelings for beauty on the one hand, and an equally intense awareness of one's own dignity on the other. In fact, the music and lyricism, as well as elements of elation and compassion inherent in these pieces made them extremely popular with the readers.

A slight variation in theme could be seen in the poems collected in a volume entitled *Pasupakhira Kavya* (The Poetry of Animals and Birds) published in 1959. The motivation was almost similar, and the poems too, equally communicated sense of joy and elation along with attitudes of sympathy and compassion. But the pieces instead of dealing with human beings, dealt with animals and birds with references to their association among themselves as well as with human beings. The stories as before were taken from many sources, such as from British tales, Chinese tales, Burmeese tales etc., as well as from Indian epics, Puranas and from such books as *Panchatantra* and *Hitopadesa*. A representative poem is *Chaitak* - about the famous horse of Rana Pratap Singh, whose heroic action and sacrifice saved the great hero from defeat and death. The poem begins with Rana's submission of sorrow ("Oh my friend, my servant/ My Chaitak, the great stallion/ Please accept my offerings of tears/ A signet of this tired heart") and ends with a new hope and strength - "Oh my Chaitak/ My dear

Chaitak/ Rise up/ Leave the illusion of this great sleep/ Rise, wake up, my great hero/ Think of the battle ahead."

Two other poetry-collections of Gadanayak may be noted here. They are *Duiti Tahar Dena* (It Has Two Wings, 1954) and *Surya O Andhakar* (The Sun and the Darkness, 1974). Both the collections contain a number of poems dealing with personal sentiments, emotion and attitude, of the type of poems collected in a volume like *Kavya Nayika* long ago, with the difference that whereas *Kavya Nayika*'s poems were mostly written in the romantic mode, the present poems conform to a realistic mode. The attitude is one of dissatisfaction and fear at how the old has changed to new- "See, the old life has vanished/Like heavenly Menaka leaving for heaven/ And the vulture, hungry, greedy/ Its two wings spread out/ Sits on the heart of new life."(*Duiti Tahar Dena*), and elsewhere, how the poet himself has changed- "My talks carry the breath of my injured mind/ My words convey red- hot agony / My voice sharp with twisted laughter/And it's only unpleasant truth I utter." (*Durmukha*), The poet's dissatisfaction and discomfort rise to an eloquence when get related to the changes in contemporary times. Thus on the occasion of August 15, his musings are- "We are different today/ Gone astray, selfish /... No food, no clothes/ Millions of skeletons moaning everywhere/ In every street, every village/..." (*Tuma Lagi August 15 - 1972,*). His threnody continues when he finds all dreams broken, lost, and considers the praise of his poetry on the occasion of Silver Jubilee celebration of Independence meaningless - "What do we do with a Copper Plaque/ On this Silver Jubilee/What do we see in this independent country/ On the banks of Sindhu, Ganga and Kavery". So too, he invokes Sarangdhar Das, the great leader of States' Agitation in Orissa- "What ugly things go on/ In this land of Panchasila/ What lies, deceit, corruption/ In the name of administration/ Oh, the poison-smoke has filled/ All corners, all ways/ Rise up, Oh, you great saviour of freedom/ Wake up from your great slumber." In

Gadanayak soft emotions joined with harsh reality and provided a glittering hardness to his poetry.

Ananta Pattanaik, like Gadanayak, had an equally impeccable command over language, and the rhyming structure of his poems had a combination of grace with ruggedness. He was a party-activist in the thirties, was imprisoned in 1940 for two years for Communist conspiracy, and his leftist attitudes and uncompromising stand against the prevailing socio-political-economic order was more of a matter of faith than a mere declaration, and continued throughout his life. All that seasoned his writing, brought a remarkable sense of realism to his innate romantic motivation, and coupled with a keen humanitarian involvement with life, his poetry became what Gopinath Mohanty said, a 'happy and sudden surprise of excess' - excess of thought and words, and a 'commitment' - commitment to his own poetic self, and to the community of men and women who live in hope and agony. Pattanaik's tone was the tone of a poet seeking new grounds, and along with his rebellious defiance his poetry provided a new sustaining factor to Oriya poetry in the fifties and sixties.

We have already noted Pattanaik's first poetic volume *Raktasikha*. It had rhetoric and emotion, particularly rhetoric related to his leftist views. It was published in 1939, when such sentiments were widely prevalent in Oriya literature. *Tarpana Kare Aji* published 10 years after (1949) was organized round a central theme - Gandhiji's assassination and reactions arising therefrom. It was a bunch of 9 poems, some of them long, that were grouped under differing topics such as, the assassination, the partition, Gandhiji's influence on people's memory of Gandhiji at a future time etc. and had strong emotional content - on the whole, a fine poetic document of the great love and reverence the poet (and the people) had for Gandhiji.

In fact, *Tarpana Kare Aji* opened the flood-gate of poetry for Pattanaik. He wrote profusely in contemporary journals, got

established quickly as a fine elder poet, and his leftist views along with a strong awareness of reality, coupled with such elements as sympathy and compassion, and his capacity to reach out to striking images, and to use Oriya language with a good deal of flexibility and grace, earned him love and respect as a substantial poet from the younger generation. His poetical volumes subsequent to *Tarpana Kare Aji* were, *Shanti Sikha* (The Flame of Peace, 1952), *Kinchit* (A Little, 1959), *Aloda Loda* (Necessary Unnecessary, 1964), *Chhaira Chhita* (The Strains of Shadow, 1966), *Abantara* (Irrelevant, 1978), *Sutratie Sukrutira* (A Thread of Goodness, 1986) and *Arutu-Rutu* (Off Season, 1986). What is to be noted in these poems is a suppleness of organization, and an intensely involved poetic mind that tends to communicate strong emotion along with an equally strong desire for impartial analysis of factors of reality around him. It would be interesting to note the poet's free-ranging spirit. For example, in an early poem from *Shanti Sikha* (*Eki Daka Aji*, What's this Call Today) he turns his back on his lady-love - "Oh, my sweet love / What is this call I hear today ? What is this fascination that grips me/ And makes me restless ?" Elsewhere, in *Swapna Dekhuchi* (I See Dreams) he is more forthright - "I am born in that nation/ The nation that has forgotten to laugh / Whose eyes are full of tears/And whose heart of stone never squeezes a drop of juice." Even when the poet makes a reference to an autumn morning the awareness is one of loss and crookedness - "I stirred the autumn morning/ Ashes have piled up on the heart of the sun / And at the top of the blue sky / And the waves of crooked laughter bite with their hoods." (*Ei Saratar Sakala Ukhari Deli*).

The poem *Chaiti Chithi Aji* (A Late Spring Letter Today) from *Kinchit,* is a good representative poem of Pattanaik's poetic oeuvre. The poem has a number of aspects. First it is just a letter from the wife to her husband asking for money which the husband cannot supply in time. Secondly, it shows the mental condition of

the wife who feels neglected by her husband, and lonely in the absence of a child. Thirdly, the deliberations of the husband , the poet, occasioned by the letter - the deliberations that show the poet's predicament, both social and financial and a mental condition of agony, suffering and helplessness. Two trends join in the poem - one, the feelings of love between the poet and his lady, the feelings that are deep and mutual, and next, a hard core of reality that clashes with the former and nullifies whatever passion or emotion generated by that. The reality is first projected in a larger canvas, where the suffering is more sinister than what avails between the poet and his lady - "Should I write what chaos came in which country/How many mothers' laps became empty by pounding bombs/How many lady-loves became like ashes in the furnace/ And how many like me became the food of dogs." But finally the reality is realized in an individual level where the intensity of suffering, and not intensity of love, dominates - "The children will come tomorrow in the morning/They would be feverish, hungry/Chaitra has come and will pass away/Let this letter and demands of love be burnt." Elsewhere, in a poem entitled *Bhumika* (Introduction) from *Arutu-Rutu* the poet declares that whatever poetry he is writing is not the real poetry he intends to write. It is only like an introduction, to that real document which he lists as so many injustice, inequality and corruption in the world - "See, see my friend. Only heaps of bones everywhere, in every house/ Where is freedom, where is deliverance/Only corruption, only begging bowls." In fact Pattanaik's voice was a strident voice in the fifties and sixties, and his reputation as a 'rebel poet' was well-earned.

Nityananda Mahapatra, son of Laxmikant Mahapatra, began his literary career in the early thirties. He inherited two important strains of his character from his family, one related to active participation in politics, and the other, a strong taste for literature. He was involved in freedom-struggle before Independence and

was imprisoned for about 7 years. After Independence he was elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly as a Member for a number of terms, and was also a Minister in the Government of Orissa for a period of time (1967 to 1971). This resulted in a strong nationalistic feeling and a keen sense of socio-political awareness in his writing. The first evidence of that we get in his two poetical volumes, *Panchajanya* (Panchajanya) and *Kalaradi* (The Call of Time), the former published before Independence and the latter later. Whereas the former deals with the happy dreams related to the coming of Independence, latter with the agony of dreams broken, when his tone became pungent and sharp in denunciation of all those who tried to appropriate the benefits of Independence ("Gandhiji's assassin was not Godse", he wrote in the Preface to *Kalaradi,* "his assassins were his followers, who in his name have violated all his advice."). This sharpness of tone we can also note in his stories that he had started writing from the very beginning. His earliest story entitled *Mausi* (Aunt), was written in 1932 (published 1934, when it was proscribed) and subsequent to that the number of stories that he wrote before Independence were mostly collected in such volumes as *Egarata* (Eleven), *Khyanika* (Momentary), and *Dhala Gara Kala Gara* (White Line and Black Line) etc., that were published later, around Independence and even afterwords. Some of the stories that can be cited are *Egarata, Khudi* (Aunt), *Ruka* (Ruka), *Garibar Debata* (The God of the Poor), *Paribartan* (The Change), *Dura O Nikata* (Far and Near), *Bus Stand, Dokandar* (The Shopkeeper), *Bhikhya* (Alms) and *Anewyansana* (Quest) etc. They range from nationalistic issues such as Salt Satyagraha of 1930 and contemporary politics, to social issues such as poverty, persecution of women, the deceit of the people in power, helplessness of rural people, and depreciating values in modern life in general, invariably with psychological twist of characters and humanitarian sympathy.

But it was not so much in poetry or stories as in novel that

Mahapatra earned his eminence. Most of his novels were written around Independence. They were *Jibanar Lakhya* (The Aim of Life), *Jianta Manisha* (The Living Man), *Hidamati* (The Soil of the Ridge), *Bhanga Hada* (The Broken Bones) and *Pirati Patha Khasada* (The Slippery Ground of Love) and later *Sukhar Sandhane* (In Search of Happiness, 1958) and in the eighties *Gharadiha* (The Homestead Land 1986). The novels too, exhibited strong social consciousness related to wasteful changing values, and also brought in such deliberations as related to aims and fundamentals of life. In twin novels, *Hidamati* and *Bhangahada* particularly, the writer raises his voice against inequality, exploitation and wealth as well as caste discrimination, and points out how the society's foundation of trust is almost toppling down, and how the cohesive ways of living in the villages have been almost swallowed over by the contemporary economic and social systems.

Gharadhia, written at the writer's advanced age, remains his best and most representative novel, an acme of all that he had tried to pinpoint in his earlier stories and novels. It is a long novel (about 530 pages, and 1,50,000 words) and pictures a period generally between the time of Independence (1947) and Chinese aggression (1961). Its location is one village, the characters comprise the villagers, and what is portrayed is the routine life of the villagers and their continuous reactions as the village continues to come under the grinding impact of socio-political changes after Independence. The novel has two protagonists, who in themselves represent two idealistic thoughts, one related to Subhas Chandra Bose, who had fought for India's independence from outside, and the other to Gandhiji, who had conducted a continuous agitation for achieving India's independence through non-violent means. The two protagonists are linked with each other, and they together provide the strongest motivation in the novel - to what extent their ideals can be effective in resisting the process of waste and

disintegration. But the final note is one of futility, uncertainty, even ironical -"This Dukhi Das is like that. He is straightening the dog's tail. There shall be no more corruption in this world... No more there will be water on fishes' body. The second incarnation of Gandhi Mahatma" At one level *Gharadiha* is a comprehensive account of what has become of India after Independence. At another level it is a continuous 'commentary' - analysis, assessment, judgement. Its insight is that of an involved writer-cum-politician who is deeply troubled over changes that are neither helpful nor beneficial, and its vision is that of an uncomfortable, dark life where the lights of goodness, compassion and sacrifice are in the danger of extinction. *Gharadiha* appears like a testament of faith of the senior novelist, and remains as an important creative document in contemporary Oriya literature.

Laxmidhar Nayak was born at Gudupailo, near Delang station, on the way to Puri, but subsequently came to Jatni (Khurda Road railway station area) and settled there. His literary career like others began in early thirties and like others too, he pursued different genres in writing, that is, poetry to begin with, then story, drama, essay, feature and novel, though it was novel that took his prime attention and he gained his immense popularity as a novelist almost at par with Kanhucharan Mohanty's popularity as a novelist. His first two novels, *Udbhranta* (Crazy) and *Bhulila Sate Sakhi* (Have You Really Forgotten Me, Oh Dear !) written in 1934 were published in the initial numbers of 'Anand Lahari Upanyasa Mala' edited by Balakrushna Kar. The books became highly popular, to the extent that the latter, by 1950, as reported, had 20 editions.

Nayak's poetry books include *Birahini O Anyanya Kabita* (The Lady in Separation and Other Poems, 1934), *Se* (He, 1940), *Khola Jharaka* (The Open Window, 1969), *Kwachit Jyostna* (Moonshine At Times, 1982), and *Gajal Jharana* (The Stream of Gazal, 1989). Of these *Khola Jharaka* particularly, is most well-known and representative. The book contains 42 poems and shows

three main trends in the poet's attitude towards life. The first is a romantic motivation, motivated towards love, beauty and nature. The second is an awareness of reality of life spent in industrial cities - a dry, drab existence in most uncongenial environment. The third is a strong sense of dejection and anger occasioned by the turn the Independence took, towards greed, selfishness and corruption, and a complete travesty of pre-Independence dreams for an equitable and benign society and administration. Thus initially it is a desire for comfort and relaxation ("I am like a blooming *palas* flower/I work and rest / I read and write/I dream of happiness, peace and unending love"- *(Palasar Sikha,* The Flame of Palasa) that goes over to a debilitating account of a routine life in the town ("He gets up while it is night/ Puts fire in the coal-chulla/ Bakes a few pieces of roti/ Gives sago to his ailing wife/ Goes to the factory/ Drives a belcha in the furnace/ Returns at one/ Blackened, sweating.."- *(Aau Jane,* Another Person), and finally to a keen anger at what has happened to the country ("What an ideal Swaraj/ Military posted at every street corner/ Hundred Forty Four, curphew, firing/ The shouts 'arrest' 'arrest' / Really / We still think India is independent / How great !" *(Ebe Bi Swadhin* Still Independent). In fact, trends exhibited in Nayak's poetry could be seen all through his writing, that is, in stories, dramas, essays as well as in his novels. His story collections were *Gotie Ratira Sathi* (The Companion of One Night, 1945), *Kankala* (Skeleton, 1945) and *Galpa Gunjan* (The Story Talks, 1947); and the dramas were *Dharmapatni* (The Wedded Wife, 1940), *Jamidar* (The Zamindar, 1942). *Lal Chabuk,* (1942) a much-acclaimed drama of Nayak, shows on the one hand, Nayak's strong nationalistic feelings and anger and dismay at the conditions of human living, and secondly, various problems related to the labour in an industrial city- suffering and agony, and generally a humiliating life they lead. Similarly his essays were occasioned by his stay and struggles at Singbhum, motivated towards betterment of Oriya language,

and unification of Oriya speaking tracts. But it was in novels that Nayak earned his greatest reputation, and showed his creative strength at its best.

Nayak wrote a total 25 novels, and majority of them were written by 1947. Some of the more important novels were, in addition to *Udbhrant* and *Bhulila Sate Sakhi, Barsara Sesha* (The End of Rains, 1942), *Asiba Kebe Priya* (When Will you Return, My Love, 1942), *Sarbahara* (Proletariat, 1947), *Ha Re Durbhaga Desha* (Oh, my Unfortunate Country, 1947) and *Se Marinahin* (He is not Dead, 1947). He wrote 7 novels after 1947, more specifically between 1970 and 1982. The more important ones were *Mo Swapnar Sahar* (City of My Dreams, 1981), *Raktajhara Bhor* (The Bleeding Morning 1981), *Nayika Badhu* (The Actress Wife, 1982) and *Sei Alua Pain* (For that Light, 1982). We have noted the popularity of *Bhulila Sate Sakhi.* In fact most of Nayak's novels were popular and went through many editions. *Bhulila Sate Sakhi* dealt with man-woman relationship, particularly love - love between two young people, that went to a crescendo, then was disturbed and ended in separation. The final point came when the two met suddenly after many years, when though the youngman had still emotions for the lady, she had married elsewhere and her emotions had been to some extent muted. Basically a novel of romantic love, it has other aspects too, such as related to contemporary spirit of nationalism and an ethnic pride concerned with Orissa and the Oriyas. At the same time changing social mores have been analysed, with to some extent leftist point of view, and particularly the woman-protagonist Salila, has been focussed as a free, modern woman with definite point of view in many matters.

Ha re Durbhaga Desha, written 13/14 years after *Bhulila Sate Sakhi,* continues many of its trends. The story is how a young man named Upendra, coming of humble situation, and of sterling qualities of head and heart, tries to establish himself against extremely adverse conditions. In the process, social conservatism,

taboos, caste-discrimination, political vested interest and chicanery, journalistic expediency and smallness, literary jealousy and intolerance, as well as economic exploitation and the torture inflicted on women etc. have been revealed - on the whole, accentuated by the failure of pre-Independence dreams of equity and goodness, and hence the justification of the title, where the country's steep degradation emerges as the basic factor. The novel provides a complex structure where personal, familial, social and political aspects have been linked together in action, analysis and commentary. Written in 1947, *Ha re Durbhaga Desha* was a significant work that looked forward to such perceptive novels as Surendra Mohanty's *Andha Diganta* and Nityananda Mahapatra's *Gharadiha*. Nayak's novel *Mo Swapnar Sahar*, written about 30 years after *Ha re Durbhaga Desha*, continued the writer's anger and resentment as before but with a difference. It was no longer at the crumbling value-structure after Independence. Instead it got concentrated on the humiliating condition of the Oriyas as a nation, their easy acceptance of insult and injury, their jealousy and intolerance for each other, and the stark selfishness of their leaders and political bosses - on the whole, their suicidal attitude which cuts at the roots of their own development. All that have been framed in the environment of one city, Rourkela, the newly-founded steel-city of Orissa, and in one character Subrat, who came over to Rourkela to establish an identity for the Oriyas and to inspire them to a better, more equitable and more prestigious living. At the end Subrat's attempts have been defeated, he has been humiliated and hounded out by his own people, and his dreams about the city - his 'dream city', lost, destroyed. The writer's attitude is distinctly spelt out in Subrat's final statement.- "Of course all the hopes, desires, dreams and expectations that I had about this city have been lost, displaced. But that dream was not related to my individual preferment, that was for the whole nation. What inspired my imagination was that Oriya nation, its language, culture

and economic development would see a wonderful sunrise in this city. It's gone, broken into pieces, I admit. This is the greatest debacle for the nation." Nayak's voice in his novels is a strong distinct one in favour of a new vision and sustaining values of life.

Gopal Chhotray was born at Jagatsinghpur, and professionally worked for many years in A.I.R, Cuttack. His dramatic career began in the early forties, and his first play, a short play, entitled *Sahadharmini* (Wife) was published in 1942. But his first full-length play that was staged professionally and brought him public acclaim was *Pheria* (Please Return, 1946). Subsequently he wrote a number of plays in the fifties, that were frequently staged by professional theatre parties at Cuttack and established his reputation as a major dramatist. These plays were, *Bharasa* (Dependability, 1953) - the expression of the hopes, pleasures, pains and agony of an idealist artist; *Parakalam* (The Feathered Pen, 1954) - a satirical analysis of political corruption, injustice and chicanery; *Sankha Sindura* (The Bangles and Vermillion, 1955). - a sharp analysis of contemporary socio-political conditions; *Ardhangini* (Better Half, 1956) - a familial and social portrait; and *Pathika Bandhu* (The Wayfarer Friend, 1956), *Avaginir Swarga* (The Heaven of the Unfortunate Woman, 1956) and *Ghatak* (The Mediator, 1961) etc. Chhotray's dramatic career had other aspects too. These were, first of all, the production of a large number of radio-plays dealing with mostly day to day familial problems with humour and irony, that were broadcast from All India Radio, Cuttack, on a regular basis, and earned him immense popularity. These have been collected in volumes such as *Bibhrat* (Confusion), *Sri Harinka Samsar* (The Family of Sri Hari) and *Purapuri Paribarik* (Completely Familial) etc. Secondly, he wrote a number of one-act plays and they were collected in *Sakha Prasakha* (Branches, 1972) and *Hasyarasar Natak* (Humorous Dramas, 1981). Thirdly, he started the tradition

of 'Gitinatya', on the model of Baishnab Pani's famous 'Jatras' and improving on that to suit the modern taste, that is, plays with songs depicting usually a known mythological story or a popular and known Oriya story. These were also broadcast over Radio and were extremely popular, and were staged all over Orissa by amateur parties. Some of their titles were, *Rangasabha,* related to Krushna's coming to Mathura and Kansa's eventual death; *Karnabadha,* related to the death of Karna in the hands of Arjuna *Harischandra* about King Harischandra's ordeals; *Sri Ganesh,* about Lord Ganesh's prowess; *Mahisa Mardhini,* about Sri Durga's victory over Mahisasura; and *Srimati Samarjani* (The Lady's Broom) based on Phakirmohan's famous story *Patent Medicine*. Fourthly, he took up some well-known novels and recast them in drama form. The novels were, Kanhucharan Mohanty's *Jhanja,* Upendra Kishore Das's *Malajanha,* Basant Kumari Pattanaik's *Amadabata* and Harekrushna Mahatab's *Prativa.*

The late forties, and fifties witnessed a lot of social changes, and the taste of the theatre-going audience also significantly changed. Chhotray and along with him Ramchandra Mishra and Bhanjakishor Pattanaik successfully catered to the change in taste, and together put Oriya drama immediately after Independence in a very substantial position. Chhotray's *Pheria* provides the motivation for returning to the village. This 'return' is both physical and mental. That is, the idealistic mentality that got tired of deceit and lies of the city, found a shelter in the peace and cohesion of the village. But the motivation also carries something more than a return to tranquillity- an awareness of pain and strain of reality and the agonies of life. In fact, in Chhotray's subsequent plays this pain of reality continues as an important part of the motivation. Thus as in *Bharasa,* in spite of the idealism and dedication of the protagonists and the fact that the play ends happily, what dominates is uncertainty, instability and lack of trust. Or, as in *Sankha Sindura,* even though the end is one of love-union, there is plenty of doubt,

lack of trust and hatred. Or, as in *Avaginir Swarga,* in spite of suggestions of idealism and final union, the woman in the play goes through suffering, agony and helplessness. Some analysis of *Parakalam,* which is probably Chhotray's best play, would be apt at this point.

The story of *Parakalam* is political. That is, whereas in the other plays of Chhotray the frame is social and action is related to the reality of social situation, here it is political - the political reality, and to what extent political pretences, deceit and chicanery affect human behaviour and mind. The play opens in the Legislative Assembly where the opposition blames the party in power of inefficiency and corruption and puts forth a challenge for election. The election takes place, the party in power gets defeated, and the opposition as combined alliance, and under the symbol of 'feathered-pen,' *(parakalam)* comes to power. It is expected that there would be a change. But nothing changes. The new party in power falls into the old rut. Its election promises are forgotten and it dips down, like the earlier one, into personal preferment and corruption, and the country as a whole continues to bleed and suffer. Thus the scepticism about the political parties who alternately come to power as if by arrangement - "Their pot is full. Like the pot of ghee there is now cream at the top of their pot. Those who will come next to power will have their new pot. They will take another five years to fill up their pot and have the cream at the top. It would be like this always, one pot taking up the cream after another. But what about our pots ? They are always empty, always make a somersault." (Act-I, Sc. VI). Or, sharp castigation of the people's honesty of purpose - "Look, look at this man Radhu Pani ! With expanded chest he went everywhere and declared, 'Vote for parakalam, then go home, sleep soundly and snore - the government will hang a golden umbrella over your head, will let you ride on the crown elephant. Now, go, ride an elephant." (Act II, Sc. VI). At the end, Rajendra, the main protagonist, sums up

the situation, a painful, agonized experience - "This province of ours is full of plenty, a surplus province. But people die here for a morsel of food. Why... Why ?... Find out with your cane who, who is responsible ?" (Act III, Sc.II). *Parakalam* was both an assessment and a castigation - assessment of the democratic governments in Orissa (also in India) in the fifties, and castigation of the way the governments were conducted. *Parakalam* in a way looked back to Manoranjan's *Abarodh* which had also a political frame. It was a strong indictment of the socio-political rot into which post-Independence India was quickly sliding down and was out to devour whatever was good in man's dispensation.

Ramchandra Mishra was born at Dasapalla, an ex-feudatory State of Orissa, on the bank of the river Mahanadi, at a distance of about 140 kms, upstream from Cuttack city. From 1946, till 1950 he had a government job from where he resigned and worked professionally as a lawyer, both at Daspalla and Cuttack. His career in drama began from 1942, when his first play *Aviman* (Pride) was staged at Cuttack by a new theatre group. Subsequently, he wrote a total 22 plays, of which three more, other than *Aviman,* were published in the forties, and nine in the fifties. Some of the plays were *Manager* (1945), *Mulia* (The Labourer, 1946), *Kabisurya* (Kabisurya, 1946), *Gharasansar* (The Family Life, 1950), *Saipadisa* (The Neighbours, 1953), *Bhaibhauja* (The Brother and Sister-in-Law, 1954), *Sebika* (The Nurse, 1955), *Mamata* (Affection, 1956), *Puani Ghara* (The Marriage Renewal Day, 1962), *Godhulilagna* (The Dusk, 1968) and *Narottam Das Kahe* (Thus Speaks Narottam Das, 1969) etc. The plays mainly dealt with social issues, family relationship and with such ideal habits, manners and ways of living that are necessary to live rightfully in the society. At the same time the new, emerging towns in the fifties in Orissa and the glossy and apparently better living conditions they offered, adversely affected the traditional village system as well as the traditional value structure. Mishra's plays-

focussed on these issues and tried to find out how best the goodness and benignity in life can be maintained.

Thus *Managar*, an early, though to some extent influenced by Kalicharan Pattanaik's plays, dealt with the developments inside a family, and tried to point out how what finally sustains is the goodness of heart and spirit of tolerance. The next play *Mulia*, structurally a better and more developed play, continues a similar theme. The younger brother goes to the town for better education. In the process he is appropriated by the glossiness of the town including the new-fangled ways of a girl from a rich family, and starts ignoring his elder brother and sister-in-law in the village who get reduced almost to the drudgery of daily labourers (*mulia*) to support him financially. The contrast between the village and the town - the freshness, trust and good relationship of the former contrast with the self-motivated scheming machinations of the latter. But at the end the goodness, idealism and relationship take precedence and the brother returns to the tranquillity of the village and the family. Mishra's other important plays *Gharasansar*, *Saipadisa* and *Bhaibhauja* were all written and staged in a period of about 8 to 10 years after Independence, and became extremely popular with the theatre-going public. *Saipadisa* dealt with two families in the village, that had initial trust for each other. But the relationship of trust was slowly vitiated by ill-advice of motivated people. Yet finally the goodness of one family, and the idealistic attachment to simple village life, resolves the conflict and the play ends with the establishment of love, trust and affection. *Bhaibhauja* was also about a farmer's family in the village that lived happily within itself, but slowly became a victim of highly motivated and notorious people, to the extent that the head of the family was sent to the prison. In fact an atmosphere of misfortune pervades the whole play which was finally resolved by goodness, amity, mutual trust and affection, but only after a sleight of hand by destiny that struck the bad people by disease and death.

Gharasansar was Mishra's best play and most popular. The play has three acts and 24 scenes. The location is mostly one village, Chandipur, and more particularly one family, Chaudhury family. The play begins with a marriage, where the marriage was accidental, without any prior preparation of amity and almost in an atmosphere of hostility. As the play proceeds the feelings of hostility, distrust and intolerance continue, but at the same time the relationship which happened all on a sudden, accidentally, without whatsoever any preparation on the part of concerned parties, becomes slowly easier and natural, and the play ends with an atmosphere of mutual trust and affection. The centre of the play is family, where all experiences merge, and from where all life-saving factors emerge, which is the whole world, and again the essence of the world. Thus the symbolic meaning of the title 'Gharasansar', that is, the home ('Ghara') and the world ('Sansar'), and they depend on each other to evolve into a benign totality. That has been made clear in Gopa's (the hero) statement towards the end of the play - "Binod, your true area of action is this home. First, you learn how to organize it, the rest would be easy. Everything is here - love, sacrifice, kindness, peace. And if you merge yourself with all that, the end would be a divine blessing."

This has been established in the structure of the play from the beginning, and the person mainly responsible for its monitoring and spread, is Gopa's wife Sarada, whom Gopa married by 'accident'. In Sarada's character both realism and idealsm have merged. She is not only a woman of strong personality and vision, she is also a projection of woman's power. This was first indicated by Mr. Burma's statement, the man who had earlier spurned a marriage with Sarada as she was rustic-born-"I admit Anima, in most places in England I had seen how women dominate. Coming over here I got the idea that women are mere items of luxury. But that day the fiery figure of a woman that I saw in your house has scorched my eyes. Involuntarily I have bowed before her". (Act-III,

6th scene). This was corroborated by Anima's confession at the end - "Sister, if you saved me, permit me to live as one should live. You have given me new life, the blindfold of modernity has got loosened from my eyes. I distinctly see, my sister, how a wonderful radiance is coming out of you and lighting this family and home." The dramatic structure of *Gharasansar* grew out of and reflected the strong current of social change after Independence. But that was not the last word in the play. It was indicated that the change was tiresome and self-consuming. But the essential motivation of *Gharasansar* was to establish life-sustaining experiences, and this has been promoted through the strength and naturalness of a woman-character. This was a new dimension in Oriya social drama after Independence, and Mishra's contribution to that effect was almost unique.

Bhanjakishor Pattanaik was born at Chhanipur, in the Cuttack district and his early days were spent at Baripada, the capital of ex-feudatory State Mayubhanj. Baripada at that time, thanks to the King, was agog with cultural activities, such as staging dramas and conducting folk-dances, including Chhou dance etc. All that in a way influenced Bhanjakishor's dramatic activities. He wrote more than 30 plays, and had a similar strong social consciousness as we have already noted in the plays of Gopal Chhotray and Ramchandra Mishra. Though his first play *Jhada Rati*, (The Stormy Night) was written in 1939, when he was a student at Baripada High School, yet his first important play *Jahar* (Jahar) was written and staged in 1946. Its background was the 'Quit India' movement of 1942, and its story dealt with the Hindu-Muslim hostility and the contemporary communal riots. But its hero Jahar was projected as a patriot, a liberal-minded, fearless person, a friend of the poor mass, who gave a call to the people to eschew violence and follow the nonviolent ways of Gandhiji. But in the subsequent plays that Bhanjakishor wrote, there was not much of political structure, though at times, in devious ways

political suggestions got into the themes of his plays, such as, in *Tophan* (Storm, 1949) there was the conflict between the haves and havenots and in *Gariba* (The Poor), written in the same year, there was the conflict between the labourers and the owners of the factories.

The main trend of most of the plays of Bhanjakishor relates to social complications and social change. On the one hand, there is individual relationship, the relationship between one person and another, where we have the element of love and its associated items such as union, separation, pleasure, sorrow and jealousy, on the other, the conflicts within the limitations of a family, the intolerance and the incapacity to understand each other. In the background what are present are some of the factors of contemporary society, such as selfishness, greed, boastfulness, and also murder, conspiracy and torture etc.. The blissful and beneficial motivation of Mishra's plays are rarely present here, or if present they are not that distinguished. On the other hand negative elements related to the individual, family, and the society are more prominent in Bhanjakishor. Though some of his plays were published laterly, in 1971 and 1991, yet most of his serious and important plays that earned him good reputation and popularity, and supplemented the plays of Mishra and Chhotray in the public mind, were written and staged between 1946 and 1960. Such plays were, in addition to *Jahar*, *Benami* (Anonymous, 1946), *Shikari* (The Hunter, 1947), *Gariba* (The Poor, 1949), *Alok* (Light, 1950), *Manikjodi* (Manikjodi, 1951), *Jayamallya* (The Victory Garland, 1952), *Atithi* (The Guest, 1955), *Saanta Ghara* (The Master's House, 1957), *Agniparikhya* (The Fire Ordeal, 1958) and *Asokastamba* (The Ashokan Pillar, 1959) etc. In all these plays different feelings related to social structure and motivation have been put forth and formulated. Thus in *Benami* selfishness, greed and mutual hostility in the context of Second World War; in *Shikari* conspiracy, deceit and corruption; in *Gariba* murder, conspiracy and torture; in *Alok*

idealism on the one hand, and suffering and lustfulness on the other; in *Jayamallya* the artist's emotions merge with suffering and pain; in *Atithi* the problems of a joint family; in *Saanta Ghara* family feud and hostility; in *Agniparikhya* idealism and hunger; and in *Asokastamba* social consciousness projected along with Gandhiji's principles and preachings.

In this context the play *Manikjodi* can be considered to some extent. It was Bhanjakishor's most popular play, probably best, and most representative of his dramatic oeuvre. 'Manikjodi', the title, refers to a disputed land and the story is the keen hostility between two rich zamindar families, particularly two heads of both the families, Barada Pattanaik and Siddhartha Roy. This is apparently the most important aspect of the play. But there are other dimensions that not only counter this aspect but also project a different motivation. That is, a capacity to understand each other and to accommodate each other in good faith. At the same time, the realistic social picture as well as the free, natural dialogues, have sustained this aspect to a large extent. For example, in Act I, Scene - VIII, in the suggestion of love, the desire to come nearer : "Surama- Forever ! Is that so ! (wiped away her tears). Good, you've come. Please come. Let me first see where that great man has gone (saw Partha coming) Look, look, you look for him everywhere, he is here. Take her, you were so worried, now talk, try to understand each other." Similarly, in Act II, Scene - VI, the suggestions of love have merged with social rapproachment, and the desire to be nearer does not show humility, but pride, to be on oneself, in a way the expression of woman's power : "Indu-O.K., O.K., it's good. I don't mind if there is no relationship. Surely, the daughter is not to be thrown away. I have asked the girl not to give in unless that husband comes and prostrates himself before her feet. As they say, you keep your prestige yourself. If a husband behaves with his wife as if she is nobody, we have nothing to do with such a person."

Manikjodi, along with Mishra's *Gharasansar* and Chhotray's *Parakalam* were good representative plays of the time. They all were structured in consummate dramatic skill, written in free, conversational, colloquial language, responded to the change of taste of theatre-going public in the fiftees, and reflected the dimensions of social change in ample measure. On the whole, the plays of Chhotray, Mishra and Pattanaik were eminently successful on the stage and for about 12 to 15 years after Independence, their plays provided the mainstay to professional theatre groups in Orissa.

New Flowering : Poetry

(*i*)

To understand the new flowering of Oriya poetry after Independence, it is necessary to have a re-look at what happened to Oriya poetry in a period of 15 to 20 years before Independence. Because the main trends of Oriya poetry at that time, continued to exert substantial influence on public mind even after Independence, almost till the middle of the sixth decade. Particularly two main trends may be noted, one, a romantic attitude and sensibility towards life in general, and secondly, a social and political awareness towards the contemporary life. Apparently these two were different trends, and in fact they developed differently at the time. But on the other hand there are evidences that in the poetic consciousness of many poets these two trends merged, and particularly in the poetry of major poets these two trends often overlapped. We may recall the names of important poets whom we have already referred to, such as, on the one hand, Padma Charan Pattanaik, Kuntala Kumari Sabat, Kalindi Charan Panigrahi, Baikunthanath Pattanaik, Mayadhar Mansingh, and Radhamohan Gadanayak etc. in the first group, and on the other, Laxmikant Mahapatra, Godabaris Mahapatra, Anant Pattanaik and Sachi Rautray etc. in the second group.

It is not just the matter of two groups. There was also a difference in perception and feeling. This may be made a little clearer even at the risk of repetition. In the romantic poetic structure feelings for love and nature go along with the poet's desire for beauty and worship of beauty, and these are joined with, to some extent, what may be termed as spiritualism or mysticism. Briefly, these are two mental states - first, the poet's capacity for a strong imaginative apprehension, that is, the capacity to put a strong veneer of imagination on one's own creative power, and secondly, when this veneer becomes a medium, over and above the routine level of emotion, another newer and more intimate layer of emotionalism builds up, which ultimately returns to the poet's perception and attitude. This is romantic consciousness which in the best poems of Baikunthanath, Kalindicharan and Mansingh got established as a powerful tradition in Oriya poetry before Independence. The second was not one of perception. It evolved from social and political reactions. It may be said that, in a way, it inherited the nationalistic consciousness of the poetry of the earlier Satyabadi group of poets. But that was only one aspect. The contemporary freedom struggle as well as the left 'progressive' ideas from the West, mingled with all that, and as a result, the tradition that was established, developed the motivation for using literature as a weapon for social change. The poems of Sachi Rautray, Anant Pattanaik and Godabaris Mahapatra provided good evidence of the same and enriched and sustained the tradition. But by the end of fifties, as has been already noted, the one time major trends had lost their freshness and appeal and had been reduced to minor ones, and the emphasis had been shifted to other types of attitudes, motivation and sensibility. Yet a few, handful of competent poets continued to subscribe to these traditions. The most important among them were, Binod Nayak (1919-2004), for romantic poetry, and Rabi Singh (b. 1932) for poetry of sharp social awareness.

Binod Nayak belonged to Jharsuguda (Western Orissa), was professionally a college teacher, and had spent a number of years in Bhubaneswar as the Secretary of Orissa Sahitya Akademi, and subsequently as its Vice-President. Though Nayak's early poems were published before Independence, his reputation as a poet came after Independence when all his important poetry books were published, and he slowly came to be recognized as a major poet of the romantic mode, and got the Sahitya Akademi award in 1970, the fourth Oriya poet to receive such award after Sachi Rautray, Baikunthanath Pattanaik and Godabaris Mahapatra. Some of his well-known poetry-collections are, *Nilachandrara Upatyaka* (The Valley of Blue-Moon, 1951), *Sata Tarara Dipa* (The Lamps of Seven Stars, 1955), *Nandadevi* (Nandadevi, 1961), *Ila Bruta* (The Circle of Ila, 1968), *Sarisrupa* (The Reptile, 1970) and *Pohala Dwipar Upakatha* (TheTales of Coral Island, 1973) etc. The title of Nayak's books are suggestive. In fact, as a whole, Nayak's poems show distinct romantic perception. Along with such feeling as related to love, nature and beauty we may also note such other attitudes in his poetry as, attachment to the past, fascination for mystic desires, the dream to leave this world for an imaginary country, or even the sentimental wishes to change this world as per one's needs. The Valley of the Moon, the Beduin Country, the Circle of Ila, the Coral Islands, even a village road, are different expressions of the same mentality. Some examples would be apt.

Thus as in *Akasara Kabita* (The Poetry of the Sky) from *Ila Bruta,* the fascination of distance and luxury of love have been realized in a highly musical surrounding :

I move in the sky, dear,
In the path of distant stars,
Along the rainbows I rest
And sleep in the bed of clouds...
I swim in the blue of the sky
I dance all along in great glee,

I am caught in the creepers of her hands

I am lost in the joys of her proud breasts.

Elsewhere, in *Sua Sari* (The Parrot and the Myna) from *Nilachandrara Upatyka*, a similar luxury of love, and a similar sense of distance :

The Parrot says,
Oh, Myna, listen,
Let's move among the stars in the Milky Ways,
On the edge of the planets let's sit
And forget woes of the earth....
From the circles of light, Oh Myna,
Let me take light to arrange your tresses,
And let me cover your body with the scarf of the sky
As you sleep on the bed of clouds.

Or as in *Meghamallar* (The Music of Rains) from *Pohala Dwipara Upakatha*, a dreamy environment of nature- "The blue shadow of forests/ And blue shadow of clouds,/ The shadow of new rains/ The soft blue rains,/ The shadow of snake's hood/ And the shadow of cactai,/ The dense blue shadow of clouds/ Like peacock's necks./ The echo of music/ In the blue musical clouds,/ And the rains come in the forest/ In the fragrance of snakes." Two good representative poems of the poet's romantic fascination for distance, are *Beduinra Desha* (In the Country of the Beduin) and *Grama Patha* (The Village Road). In the former the combination of love, dream and colour - "Where the night becomes red with Persian wine/ The Beduin woman drunk with wine/ Like the flowers of pomegranate/ Offers the heat of her body in unpretentious love/ The yellow moon in the sky/ Smears with maroon the tops of setting hills/ Let us go and have our nest there/ In that Beduin country/ In the paradise of sleepless nights." In the latter, the rural nature mingles with a dreamy sensation of loneliness :

The palm trees at a distance
Sing songs of earth to the sky,

And the village road joins there the horizon,
The fields after fields and white flowers of reeds,
And roots of scented grass
In the vast extensive land,
And again the land and the forest
And when you cross the forest
Look, the uncle's village at a distance.

Rabi Singh, who belongs to Jagatsinghpur, had a stormy childhood and eventful young days, and is probably the unique example of a poet, who could establish himself against heavy odds by dint of sheer merit and strength of mind. The tone of social commitment is vivid and loud in his poetry, and though socialistic ideas are at the roots of his poetry, the innumerable poems that he has written so far are frequently motivated by contemporary social and political discrimination and distress in life with a strong trend towards social justice and equality. He has more than 30 poetry-collections so far. Some of the well-known volumes are, *Charam Patra* (An Ultimatum, 1961), *Sithila Balga* (Loosened Reins, 1962), *Bhurkuti* (Frown, 1963), *Bidirna* (Torn Apart, 1964), *Apritikar Kabita* (Unpleasant Poems, 1966), *Jwalara Mala* (The Garland of Heat, 1967), *Durgam Giri,* (Impassable Mountain, 1971), *Sarbahara* (Proletariat, 1974), *Tarakar Luha* (The Tears of Stars, 1978), *Agnibeda* (The Vedas of Fire, 1981), *Kebala Sangram* (Only Battle, 1989), *Lohita Samkranti* (The Red Day, 1993), *Kranti Kamodi* (The Song of Revolution, 1997) and *Khasao Mukuta* (Take Off Your Crown, 1997) etc. As in Binod Nayak, so too in Rabi, the titles of the books by themselves are suggestive. Only recently his poems are being collected in volumes, and the first volume, entitled *Rabi Singh Rachana Sambhar* (The Collected Poems of Rabi Singh) containing the poems from five of his early books, came out in 2003. The poet dedicates the volume to his parents, both of whom had passed away when he was 14, and remembers them as uncompromising social rebels who provided him with

sufficient sustenance to pass through a 'breathless strife through life.'

Rabi's earliest poems were written in the fifties, when he was in a dire strait, uncompromisingly fighting to have an identity in the society, and were published towards the end of the fifties - his first-ever poetry book was entitled *Pathaprantar Kabita* (The Poems of the Wayside) and contained about 30 poems. The strong tone, attitude and aggressiveness of Rabi's poems, particularly at a time when the initial enthusiasm for Independence was getting sour due to various socio-political reasons, had an immediate impact on the readers, both elderly and the youngsters. A letter from Baikunthanath Pattanaik, well-known elderly poet, to Rabi, at that time, was revealing. It showed Pattanaik's great appreciation of Rabi's poetry and his recognition of Rabi's poetic potentiality. Normally Rabi's poems had rhetorical structure, but at the same time also they showed the young poet's complete command over Oriya language, a continuing current of sympathy for the downtrodden, motivation against social inequality and discrimination, and hopes for a new age of equal opportunity for all. Thus, in an early poem entitled *Abanchhita* (Unwanted) the voice rises to rhetorical heights against the torturing powers of the society- "Your obstructions make me powerful, oh you social conservatives/ Your curses give me strength and make me live longer/ My pen has nothing else to do/ But to destroy all your maths, temples, religions and administration." Elsewhere, the vision is for new times, free of torture and inequality- "When in the mansions of oppression/ Lamps will be lit with the blood of the oppressor/ When in the horizons of great divisions/ Millions of suns of equality will rise/ When the daughters of proletariat will sing the songs of welcome/"

Social consciousness, particularly an awareness of the selfishly motivated socially and politically powerful who rule the roost everywhere, and an uncompromising challenge to their

power, formed the core of Rabi's poetry from the early days. Along with that there are other emotions too, such as, feelings for nature, for love, for companionship, and tenderness for human plight. Thus the title-poem from the collection *Charam Patra* was a strong tirade against the God's discriminatory dispensation - "Oh God !/ This is my ultimatum/ Take it./ And within 24 hours./ By this morning tomorrow/ Make your throne in Paradise empty/ Oh God, take this/ Take it/" The poet makes out the reasons for his 'ultimatum' explicit, that the God never sees where the 'humanism' lies, he is 'mad with power', 'blind', a 'dull', 'static', 'decaying' object, and highly discriminatory who makes it a rule of his creation for some people to exploit the labour of other people, permits the destruction of thousands of cottages so that a single mansion may rise, and closes his eyes when thousands of little children are sacrificed for petty gains. Elsewhere, for example, in a poem like *Dahana* (Suffering) from *Sithila Balga,* the strident reference to God becomes mild, but the conviction about essential humanism continues, and additionally it gets involved with his own suffering- "I don't know if there is somebody as 'God'/ In my struggles for life/ I hardly think of him,/ Where I wonder, is the time for that ?/ On my front/ At my back/ Only smallness, only meanness/ Only the trail of animals./ My life is half-spent in protest/ The other half, as I walk, floats on my front, full of death."

In fact, in spite of the changes in the context, Rabi's motivation towards social equality and intolerance against social and otherwise discrimination, and anger against man's smallness and hypocrisy, remained as strong factors in his poems. A good example is the title-poem from the book *Tarakara Luha.* The poem has a context of love, an address of the poet to a lady whom he has never seen, but for whom he shows emotional attachment:

I have never seen you, woman
I have received only your garlands,
...Oh, you woman of far away place !

I do not know if we can meet ever.
I am a lonely wayfarer,
My life is a red-hot star
Full of the heat of revolution.

The initial emotional upsurge gives place to an introspection, an analysis of his own suffering, sense of futility and consequent anger :

From whatever planet I slipped and when
That was my birth horoscope -
The cries of humanity and tears of beauty.
I am a heated expression of all
And fatigued, melting sky all around me,
All my charms and decorations I have left,
A thirsty traveller-bird, I fly eternally.

A different poem, with a different context is *Baliapal* from *Nabam Swarga* (The Ninth Heaven, 1994), a poem written in 1986, on the occasion of the mass-movement against the attempts of the Defence Department of the Government of India, to station a missile base at Baliapal, on the sea-coast in Balasore district of Orissa. It was a long drawn-out movement, and the poet's tone was both aggressive and full of sympathy :

You don't like new leaves and young shoots of paddy
The green fields, habitations and open sky,
The demon loves the cremation ground
And not the carol of birds.
Oh, you power-loving people
What arrangement is this - making a place of death !
Oh, you gray tiger
Don't get in, you would be killed.

Still differently, we may think of a group of poems, written at different times, such as *Luhar Odissa* (Iron Orissa), *Bichitra E Desa.... Bichitra Pradesha* (Strange Country Strange Province), *Jaya Jagannath* (Hail Jagannath) and *Taila Sambhasana*

(Welcoming through Oil) occasioned by general socio-politically debilitating and decaying conditions of the country, particularly Orissa. The tone continues to be aggressive, though the attitude has become sharply satirical - a reminder of such satirical poems of Godabaris Mahapatra. A representative poem is *Luhar Odissa* which was occasioned by the bravadoes of a Chief Minister of Orissa who declared that he would make Orissa a great place of steel production, a promise that ended in smoke :

> I will rewrite a new history of Orissa
> Hundreds of steel plants and innumerable industries
> everywhere,
> The smoke from chimneys will fill Orissa's sky
> Iron will be sold in roads and markets everywhere,
> Rice of stainless steel would be sold in shops
> Iron fishes will be caught in ponds, canals and rivers
> And iron vegetables, lentils and leaves and reddish of iron.
> I will mould the body, mind and spirit of Orissa in iron frame.

In his preface to *Sithila Balga.* Rabi made a declaration of his vocation - "I don't write to please somebody, or even to displease somebody. My purpose has been to declare an uncompromising protest against all exploitation, torture, transgression and animality that is current in today's world." In fact Rabi's poetry provided a powerful dimension of dissent in post-Independence Oriya poetry, and coupled with his complete command over the suppleness and flexibility of Oriya language, he is recognised today as one of the major poets writing in the language.

(ii)

Both Binod Nayak's poetry and Rabi Singh's poetry, very substantial at that, continued, as we have pointed out, main trends that were dominant before Independence. There were other poets too, sensitive and perceptive, who more or less imbibed those trends and gave fruitful expression of that in their poetry. They were, to

mention relatively more important ones, Nirmala Devi (1907-1987), Krushnachandra Tripathy (1911-1997), Kunjabihari Das (1914-1993), Janakiballav Mohanty (1925-1999), Bidyutprava Debi (1926-1977) and Benudhar Raut (1926-2005) who gave expression to the first trend, that is, of 'romantic' attitude and understanding, and Brajanath Rath (b.1936) and Prasanna Patsani (b.1947), to the second trend, that is, 'progressive' poetry of social commitment.

Nirmala Devi belonged to an aristocratic Karan family of Balikuda, in the undivided Cuttack district, and was given in marriage at an early age to an officer of the then Orissa Administrative Service. She did not have much formal education and had a large family too. Yet she was creative from the beginning that continued till her death. She composed thousands of lyric poems with remarkable spiritual perception and love for nature, which earned her recognition as one of the finest of such poets. Some of her poems were collected at a later age of her career in three volumes, entitled *Dinante* (At the Day's End, 1953), *Seemante* (At the Frontier, 1962) and *Barnaraga* (Multiple Colours, 1986). She excelled in a mystic apprehension of life with love as a key force. Such is the poem *Saraga Parase* (Touch of Love) from *Barnaraga* :

Oh, my friend, look !
Beyond this road of night, in the east
The golden brush draws the sparkling picture,
The tree and creepers loaded with leaves
And happy with the touch of young dawn
Greet each other on the face of the lake
And innumerable flowers and fruits drop so lovingly.
At that sweet, seductive moment
As offerings at the feet of Mother Goddess,
Whatever was dark and sinful
At that joining point of life and death

Look, Oh, friend, fades
And new beauty is carved everywhere,
Whatever is left unused, untouched
To be written in the life's almanac
And all the knots of unfulfilment, oh, look,
They all open there, beyond.

One can note how joy, happiness as well as a responsiveness to the beauty of nature and a perception of things beyond, have joined together to provide a poem of powerful sentiments.

Elsewhere, in a poem entitled *Nisun Tatinira Dhare* (On the Bank of the Lonely River) from the same collection *Barnaraga,* the waiting for love is full of agony and pain, and shows the poet's fears and insecurities - "On the bank of this lonely river/ I wait counting days and hours/ Again and again,/ Waiting to hear your footfalls./ Dark, blind night surrounds me, oh friend, come/ And please, take away my garland of tears./ The lamp of my eyes is put out/ I am alone in darkness/ And all my life's flowers drop off." Differently, with a subtle mystic touch, and with an emotion of intense fulfilment is the poem entitled *Tume* (You) from *Seemante :*

They say you are colourless,
Then how do you exhibit so many colours ?
They say you are without fragrance
Then how your fragrance seduces us ?
They say you have no feeling of touch
Then how your touch excites the heart ?
And if you have no flavour
Say, how your sap fills the earth ?
You are an unbodied gem
Your colours and flavours make us mad,
You are noiseless
Yet the whole earth is full of your noise,
You are great, empty space
Yet your completeness is everywhere,

Your ways are strange

Listen ! I write only about you.

In her introduction to *Barnaraga* Nirmala Devi writes about her poems very revealingly - "I don't know the times when I wrote my poems. I have been writing for the last about 50 years. My education is slight. I believe he, who is most intimate to one, is inside me, and he gets everything written through me. That is why, I bow to him from my deepest heart,"

Krushna Chandra Tripathy was born at Banapur, close to Chilika, and spent his career teaching in different Government schools, and earned a good deal of recognition as a dedicated and ideal teacher. He was also equally dedicated to poetry from his early years and earned reputation for his spirit of nationalism, sensitive response to rural life and nature, and sympathy for the distressed humanity in general. He had a number of poetry collections, such as, *Dipti* (The Glow), *Ahuti* (Oblations), *Matidipa* (The Earthen Lamp), *Shadhakar Swapna* (The Dreams of the Devotee), *Bela O Bichi* (The Sea Shore and Seeds) and *Kutira Bansi* (The Flute of the Cottage) etc. along with two well-known and popular books, *Paika Matira Gatha* (The Stories of the Land of the Paikas, 1985) and *Taru O Truna* (The Tree and Grass, 1991), on the whole, a total of about 18 books. *Paika Matira Gatha* contained 28 narrative poems about events, situations and personalities related to the heroic resistance of the 'Paikas' (Foot-Soldiers) from Khurda, the then capital of the Gajapati Kings of Orissa, against the British regime in the second decade of the 19th century. The soldiers fought under the leadership of Baxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar Mahapatra, an extremely able commander, and it was probably India's first war of Independence. The soldiers fought bravely, but it was a losing one, and Tripathy's poems had both aspects - the heroism of the adventure, and the melancholy of the loss. Thus on the one hand the declaration of pride - "The glories of this great Utkal/ The wealth, the people, the independence

and honour/ You have sustained them for years/ Oh, my war loving nation/ Hundreds of Paika leaders of Khurda"/ on the other the loss and melancholy - "All over, all over today/ Barunei, the green mountain, will speak/ It will speak to the world/ The Gajapti king is no more/ The commander of the fort is no more/ All have gone to dust/ All crown/ All soldiers/ All/..." But *Taru O Truna* provides more personal emotions and attitudes - of joy, happiness, sorrow, sympathy and companionship. Thus in a poem, entitled *Abasesha* (The Remnants) - "I walk around in green fields under crimson lights of dawn/ New and newer emotions rise in my poor heart/ I sing so many songs myself silently/ And silent tears drop from my eyes - for whom.?" Or differently, love for one's own place - "I have left that distant land/ It comes to me always every moment/ That river and mountain/ Those trees and creepers/ Those roads cut in stones/ And through fields and stretches of land/ More than all places of pilgrimage/ My only holy place /- Unforgettable through years/" (*Narmada*) Tripathy also wrote an autobiography which was significantly entitled *Nirab Kabitie* (A Silent Poet,1987).

Kunjabihari Dash was born at Rencha Sasan in the Puri district. Professionally he was an academician and served in many colleges of Orissa as well as in the Post-Graduate Department of Oriya in the Viswa-Bharati University at Santiniketan. He was a prolific writer, wrote in many forms including novel, travelogue, criticism, and got immense reputation as a collector of Oriya folk songs and tales. But poetry was his first love and he had started writing poetry even from his student days and continued throughout his career. He had about 30 poetry-collections, including some 6 collections containing rhymes and entertaining short poems for children. As in Tripathy so in Dash too, there was a strong spirit of nationalism, particularly as related to places, events and personalities of Orissa. Such volumes were, *Duduma* (Duduma, 1946), *Bagra* (Bagra, 1948), *Lahu O Lohit* (Blood and Redness)

Jeumane Banchichhanti (Those who are Alive), *Naba Malika* (New Garland, 1951), *Mati O Lathi* (Earth and Stick), *Birasri* (Hail to Heroes, 1949) etc. Secondly, there were poems that conveyed his desire for social equality and strong sympathy for the distressed and downtrodden, as in the volumes *Kankalara Luha* (Tears of the Skeleton, 1949) and *Se Eka Lomasha Nila Hata* (That is a Blue Hairy Hand). Thirdly, there were a sizeable number of poems, specially short poems, that dealt with the poet's strong emotions as related to love, nature, beauty and imaginative ruminations about life and life's purposes. Such volumes were, *Kalakallo* (Ripples and Waves, 1947) *Sehi Mora Preyasi* (She is My Beloved), *Narmada* (Narmada) and *Prabhati* (About Dawn, 1943) etc, Dash did not strike out any new mode, but even within continuing dimensions his voice showed a good deal of distinction and individuality. Particularly his intimate awareness of folk-songs provided folk structural motifs to his poetry, almost a singular distinction, one may say, reminiscent of the poems of Nanda Kishor Bal, A few representative poems would be *Bhalapae Muhin* (I Love), *Sashibhusan Roy* (Sashi Bhusan Roy) and *Halia Geeta* (The Song of the Tiller), Whereas the first shows the poet's love for nature and nature's beauty ("I love when across the clouds/ The single star pours its light silently./ When a piece of leaf circles and falls/ And the butterfly sits lazily on the petals of flowers."), and the second, the poet's concern and respect for a fine writer, that is, Sashibhusan Roy ("One eye is gone/ The other about to set/ Yet your pen goes on/ Oh, Sashibhusan Roy, Welcome !"), The last, in the structure of a folk-song, as the song of a tiller, is a castigation of people who exploit and torture the poor and the innocent folk :

> The vulture sits on the golden mountain, ho !
> It has two wings yet it says it's man,
> It scrubs flesh from bones and eats,
> It gives chaff and husk in the name of paddy
> And gives skins of potato in the name of betel leaf,

Blood drops from its wild-cat-eyes
And its teeth move menacingly, ho !

Janakiballav Mohanty (Bharadwaj) was born at Dagara Sahi, in the undivided Cuttack district. Professionally an academician, he taught in Govenment colleges in Orissa, including as Professor of Oriya in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. He did pioneering work in Oriya lyrics, and wrote and edited extensively on Oriya literature. His first poetry collection *Tirjyak* (Oblique, 1951) which included his irreverent poem on Upendra Bhanj earned him good reputation as a poet. His subsequent poetry collections were *Chhayapath* (Milky Way 1959), *Chhotaru Bada* (From Small to Big, 1961), *Bichitravarna* (Multi-coloured, 1973), *Seshalipi* (The Last Script, 1990) and *Seshabataran* (The Last Descent, 1998). Janakiballav wrote in the prevailing romantic mode, but in a conversational language and with a strong social sense that distinguished his poems from that of many others. A good representative poem is *Sei Ama Gan* (That is Our Village) from *Chhayapatha.* It is the portrait of an Orissan village in 1956, at a distance of about 30 kms. from the city in an idyllic surrounding, but which remains steeped in complete poverty and negligence, and a continuous victim of flood and disease, where all hopes of a post-Independence reconstruction remains a misnomer, The poet laments - "I see only distress without remedy/ Plans remain thousand leagues away from us/ We are only pushed by calamities." An associated poem was *Jatra* (Journey) from *Bichitravarna,* which in the form of Krushna's call to his kinsmen at Mathura to migrate to Dwaraka, shows the poet's desire for a new dispensation and for different and better ways of living :- "Let all that is old remain in oblivion/ Let us create a new culture in that new land/ Let our actions bring back a new dawn/ Full of colours, grace and glory."

Bidyutprava's parental village was in Ali (Aul) area in the undivided Cuttack district, but a large part of her early years were spent at Cuttack, where her father, Nimaicharan Das, a well-known

writer, was settled. Her formal education was limited, but she educated herself at home, and in a way got well-versed in contemporary poetry, and in her own writing too, stuck to that one genre, that is, poetry. She had started writing from early years and her first book, entitled *Sabita* (The Sun) was published in 1947,under the encouragement of her father. She continued to write throughout (more prolifically after her marriage in 1949) till her untimely death (1977), and had about 25 volumes of poetry, including a number of collections for children. Some of her well-known books were, *Kanakanjali* (Offering of Gold, 1948), *Bihayasi* (The Winged Bird, 1949), *Bandanika* (Worshipful, 1950), *Swapnadipa* (The Lamp of Dream, 1951), *Jharasiuli* (Fallen Flowers, 1952) etc. All these as well as a few more were all collected together in her first collected work *Sanchayan,* 1957). Her subsequent important books were *Puspanjali* (Flower Offerings, 1967), *Jyotisikha* (The Divine Flame, 1973) and *Suryamukhi* (The Sun Flower, 1973) which were occasioned by her contact with Pondichery Ashram and Sri Ma.

One powerful and dominating aspect of Bidyutprava's poetry was her sensitiveness to the beauties of rural nature as well as to rural habits, manners and festivals. This was because a substantial part of her life was spent in villages, on the banks of rivers, both before and after her marriage, both in the childhood days as well as in adult life, a large part of which she could absorb in her personality and attitudes. Another aspect could be seen in her poems for children which she started writing after the birth of her first child, and continued off and on in her career. A third was a subtle spiritual element which was always present in her poetry, at times in distinct formulation, at times as a part of her poems dealing with nature and family affairs, and finally as clear expressions of her strong devotion to Sri Aurobinda and Sri Mother. She had also other independent emotions, such as, emotions of love, of family relationship, of joy and happiness and sorrow in

day-to-day life. In fact, her intense poetic talent ranged across diverse areas, and everywhere it was marked by clarity, sincerity and involvement. Thus this is how in the poem, *Saswati* (Eternal) from *Bihayasi*, the poet sees the essential beauty of nature, like the coming of responsive living being, - "Do you really come, I wonder / Along the dew-washed path/ Under the veil of mist/ And over the heads of hills/ When the forest of fallen-leaves murmurs/ And when the birds gather in a festival/ Across the golden fields of crops." Or, the relationship of love with intense feelings of regret and joy, as in *Priya Bani* (The Words of the Beloved) from *Sanchayan* - "Could you tell me, Oh friend, could you/ When separated where do we go/ Where, to which unknown land ?/ Have you ever thought of even in surprise/ How we have no claims whatsoever/ Never so permanently/ In this beautiful land, this sweet land ?" Elsewhere, as in *Puspanjali,* when she composed a poem on Sri Ma, it throbbed with intense spiritualism- "Where I am wherever I go/ Wherever I look for whatever/ It is Mother's smile Mother's beauty/ I get her always. / I have no fear, no dread, no hesitation/ Wherever I look I see her eyes/ Looking at me always."

Benudhar Raut was born at Tara, in the district of Keonjhar, formerly a feudatory State. An academician, he taught Oriya in a number of Government colleges of Orissa and established himself as a distinguished poet and critic. He wrote sparingly, and he had only two books of poetry, one, *Pingalar Surya* (The Sun of Pingala, 1967) that contained 49 of his poems written between 1947 and 1966, and the second, *Ek Tara Dui Tara* (One Star Two Stars) published 31 years after, in 1998, that contained a total 38 poems, written after 1967. The poems of *Pingalar Surya* conveyed a general romantic sensibility and attitude along with personal emotions related to love, companionship and reflections about life. These changed in the second volume that showed greater grip over reality and deeper involvement with life's joys and sorrows. Thus such poems as *Jogi* (Yogi), *Preeti O Priya* (Love and Lady- Love),

Nutan Barsa O Kapot (The New Year and the Dove), *Duiti Akhira Suryabarta* (The Sun-Circles of Two Eyes) and even the title poem *Pingalar Surya* etc. contrast with such other later poems as *Picnic Trip*, *Eka* (Alone), *Jungle*, and *Karna : Sesha Ratira* (Karna : Last Night) etc. In *Nutan Barsa O Kapot* the poet speaks how he gets linked with the six seasons - "In this slim earth/ With all my love/ With spots of rhyme/ In great affection/ I painted six seasons/ Six colours - sweet, graceful/...". Or, in *Duiti Akhira Suryabarta* he probes into the eyes- "Whose eyes these two ?/ Why in their eager looks blossom the source of light." But in *Eka* it is an agony of loneliness - "There was none, I found/ I alone in the circle of heat/ Being consumed alone/ I am nowhere, hanging in emptiness/ Squeezed, tortured/....". In *Karna : Sesha Ratira* agony is extended to mythology, to the agonized reflections of Karna in the night before his last battle with Arjuna :

I have no sleep tonight
The doleful tears of pale evening
Scattered like jewels in stars,
Make me restless.....
Tell me, Oh my last night !
Who else is there more than me
So defeated, helpless, lonely, afflicted.

Brajanath Rath was born at Sunahat in Balasore town. He writes prolifically, and beginning from late forties his poetic career spans a period of more than 50 years. His poetical volumes so far are, *Maru Golap* (Desert Rose, 1960), *Nijaswa Samlap* (Own Dialogue, 1979), *Nisabda Pratibad* (Silent Protest, 1977), *Savyatar Muhan* (The Face of Civilization, 1979), *Manaŕa Manchitra* (The Mind's Map, 1984), *He Mahajiban* (Oh, Great Life, 1991) and *Laghu Sataka* (Light Hundred, 1993) etc. "I feel that in my poetry a realistic awareness has joined with a romantic sensibility" writes Rath in the preface to his collected poems *(Swa Nirbachita Kabita,* Poems Self-Selected, 2002). Elsewhere he

points out how humanistic sentiments have often motivated his poetry-writing. In fact Rath's poetry is a good mixture of all these elements. A good example is *Swapnabhanga : Jhadar Aghat* (Dreams End : When the Storms Strike) from *Nisabda Pratibad.* Initially it is an involvement in dreams - "When I was asleep with a sorrowful heart and tired body/At my lonely cottage/ Then at the depth of night/ I saw innumerable dreams/ In the midst of dreams/ I myself became a dream." Then the dreams broke violently, when the storms came : "While thinking so/ I suddenly opened the door of the closed room/ When I saw in great surprise / Not dreams/ But thousands of iron fists of revolting storms had been raised/ That merciless strike broke the doors of the night/ And torches of freedom flared up/ And the east became red/" Elsewhere in *Kabira Prarthana* (The Poet's Prayer) he is more explicit : "Give me twentyfive dazzling, fast, white doves/ White as conch, as silver/ Of peace and progress, of equality and friendship/I will let them fly in the mind's sky/ Of my innumerable countrymen," At the same time there are other emotions too. First, a note of sadness that things are not all right - "Today in the midst of all we have got/ We have lost our habitation of happy dreams / And are lost in sorrows and agonies. " *(Thikana Jaichu Bhuli*, We have Forgotten Our Address), and secondly an anger that things have so changed :

Freedom today is like the fruit of the sky
Tell me, how can you ever get it when you search ?
It is now swallowed by the truncated demon-
The feigning, deceitful demon of the time,
How can you get the ghee or honey
Say, how can it ever ooze out ?

Prasanna Kumar Patsani was born at Balugaon, near Chilika. From his early days in the school he was interested in politics, particularly with the radical left politics, took part in many agitations, and organized a number of literary groups to that effect.

His has been a chequered career, including sojourns in the Himalayas and participation in the contemporary politics. He has been at different times Minister in the Government of Orissa and Member of the Parliament. His writings remained mostly confined to poetry, and like Brajanath Rath's and Rabi Singh's, a substantial part of it deals with reflections about the left politics and the ideas of socialistic equality and humanistic sympathies. In addition, his poems also show a strong trend of spiritualism as well as romantic cogitations. His first book, a long poem, was significantly on Lenin, entitled *Lenin.* It was written in 1972-73, and published in 1976. Subsequently Patsani has about 22 poetry books, including poetry-collections and long poems. They first of all, deal with 'progressive', socialistic or humanistic ideas - *Bagha Aan Bhitare Piknik* (Picnic in the Mouth of the Tiger, 1976), *Raktapatha* (The Blood-Path, 1982), *Sapa Gatare Sakala* (The Morning in the Snake's Hole, 1982), *Prasanna Patsainka Sahe Ek Kabita* (One Hundred and One Poems of Prasanna Patsani, 1987), *Agnijuga* (The Age of Fire, 1988), *Akasara Kathagadare Bandi Suryanku Jera* (The Cross-Examination of the Sun in the Wooden-Enclosure of the Sky, 1992) and *Chhanchanara Denare Bharat* (India in the Wings of the Hawk, 1993) etc.; secondly, poems with romantic attitudes, related to nature, dream and spiritual vision - *Barsa* (The Rains, 1981), *Dekha Hele Kahibi Se Katha* (I will Tell you that When We Meet, 1990), *Nilanupur* (The Blue Anklet, 1991) and *Otha Phanare Kathau* (The Print of the Wooden-Shoe on the Lip's Hood, 1994) etc. In addition there are poems dealing with travel (*Amarnath,* Amarnath, 1990; *Samparka,* Communications, 1991, and *Balira Chithi O Labang Thikana*, (The Letter from Bali and Address of Cloves, 1992) etc. and poems dealing with the past glory and present distress of Khurda, Patsani's own area and constituency - *Khordhar Kabita Mun Padhe,* (I Read the Poems of Khurda, 1989).

Reference to Lenin shows the poet's early commitment to

left ideas - "Lenin has broken down the Czarist regime/ Lenin's hand has given food, salt and onion to the labourer/", and again, "Lenin is never a deserted castle/ He is never an old, broken stone/ His birth is to break down the palaces of the capitalist/ To twist the neck of the exploiter." The poet's commitment has never left him, only his early rhetoric and stridency became more organized and disciplined and acquired greater symbolic significance. Good examples are his poems in *Sahe Eka Kabita.* Thus the poem *Samrat* (Emperor)- "Your Majesty, please see-/ There are no dews on grass tops/ Only dust / The leaves of trees are yellow,/ Not a single bird is seen anywhere./ The east has vanished in deep mist./ The Emperor smiled/ And said - Oh, how wonderful !/ The morning of a golden age has come to our kingdom,/ At last !" Or, the poem *Bhaya* (Fear), a sense of foreboding - "Please inform the Prince/ Let him return from the hunt/ Through the secret door,/ Inform the Princess/ This is not the time to pace about on the palace roof./ Hold tight to the throne/ All of you/ Lest it shakes and falls./ And close quickly/ All the doors of the palace./ See, how monstrously/ The sky gets red,/ The spy has informed/ A storm is coming-/ A devastating storm." Elsewhere, as in *Ramarajya* (Ram's Regime), the discipline -

> Does the country change
> Through processions, or in slogans
> All the world's ideals are shut up in paper bags,
> Does the country change
> Through long speeches on tall pandals,
> This would be enough -
> If there is diet for the ailing
> And food for the hungry.

Patsani's social-consciousness is sharp and pointed, and coupled with preciseness and irony, it often provides substantial thrust for the readers. But his nature related poems have a different mode, plenty of imagination and joy. Thus the poem *Darjeeling*, and the

reference to mountains - "Kanchanjangha could be seen/ And high above the Everest./ As if an ornamental girdle in the golden sun, / As if the smiling chin of an unmarried girl,/ Like a ripe-papaya when cut open."

(iii)

Along with the trends we have mapped out in the earlier section, which were in a way continuation of what availed before Independence, a different type of poetry, different in attitude, sensibility and structure, popularly known as 'new poetry', came to surface after Independence. Initially it had a low profile, but as years rolled on it grew in strength, dimension, and influence, and became the most important and major trend. It encompassed almost all intelligent and sensitive poets after Independence, and not only got established and created the strongest poetic atmosphere after Independence, but also branched out in many new and newer directions, and has steadily flourished during the last 50 years. Its orientation was completely different from that of pre-Independence poetry. Most of the poetic preoccupations of the earlier period were no longer relevant, and were pushed to the background and ignored. All on a sudden the attitude was lifted from the environs of fixed locality, to move beyond, to an almost cosmopolitan environment, and attention was focussed on consideration of man's complicated existence in a fast-changing world. We have seen the beginnings of this orientation in Sachi Rautray's poetry. But it assumed true shape, colour and force in the poetry of Guruprasad Mohanty (1924-2004), and he was substantially supported by Bhanuji Rao (1926-2001), Ramakant Rath (b.1934) and Sitakant Mahapatra (b.1936).

Guruprasad Mohanty, nephew of Kanhucharan Mohanty, Gopinath Mohanty and Anant Pattanaik, was born at Nagabali, the village of Kanhucharan and Gopinath. He passed from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and spent his career as a college

teacher of English, in different Government colleges of Orissa, of which a number of early years were spent at Puri, in close contact with Puri's sea and sea-beach. Guruprasad 's literary output is very sparse, only about 80 poems, in a creative career spanning about 50 years, beginning from early fifties, and have been collected in the two books *Samudrasnana* (The Sea-Bathing, 1970), and *Ascharya Avisara* (The Strange Tryst, 1988), All these poems were collected together subequently in a volume entitled *Kabita Samagra* (1995), and again a posthumous volume, entitled *Guruprasadanka Kabita* (2005). Three places, Guruprasad says, provided motive-force to his poetry. One was his village Nagabali, and the adjoining river Sidhua; the second was the sea and the sea-beach at Puri; and the third a little- known place, a place called Marshaghai, a market-village on the river Luna (a branch of Mahanadi), at about 100 kms away from Cuttack towards the east, where he stayed for a short period after his retirement from the Government service, as the Principal of the local college, at the request of late Prahallad Mallik, the then Minister and a local person. His village and Puri provide background references to the poems of *Samudrasnana* and Marshaghai to that of *Ascharya Avisar.* Guruprasad is like a legend in modern Oriya poetry. His initial impact in the fifties, the strange attractive power of his poems, the quick cordial response the poems drew out from his readers, the mix of emotion and intelligence in the structure of his poems that at the same time excite and perplex, as well as his impeccable command over colloquial Oriya language - these, along with his steady refusal to write more poems, his complete disregard for any type of honour or recognition, and his solitary way of living, all contributed to that legend.

Though Guruprasad's poems had started to come out in journals (particularly *Jhankar,* a monthly) from 1952/53, yet they took their first book-form in 1955, entitled *Nutan Kabita* (New Poetry). Even then it was a slender volume, a joint publication,

where some of Guruprasad's poems were published with some poems of Bhanuji. But it was a landmark, and its brief introduction challenged the supremacy of poets such as Mayadhar Mansingh, Radhamohan Gadanayak, Sachi Rautray and Anant Pattanaik etc. belittled the type of poetry they wrote and claimed that poetry could be written differently and more significantly. This was supported by a short-lived journal, entitled *Prajna* (1960-1961), that published along with other pieces, Guruprasad's most disturbing and longest poem *Kalapurusha* (The Hunter). All that angered the old guards (Mansingh angrily blasted the whole attempt in his Sahitya Akademi *History of Oriya Literature*. 1962), yet by the end of fifties, thanks to Guruprasad, Oriya poetic atmosphere had perceptibly changed and post-Independence new Oriya poetry had arrived with a bang.

Guruprasad's early poems, a combination of many new aspects such as related to theme, attitude, treatment, language etc., appropriately responded to the change in the mental attitudes of the readers. An early poem was *Priyabandhabi* (Dear Woman) which was apparently a romantic exhortation, the address of the protagonist to his lady-love. But that was deliberate, what was relevant was a mocking, ironic tone and a sceptical evaluation of the relationship where the conclusion is one of agony, uncertainty and a strong awareness of passing time. A related poem was *Gobara Ganesh* (The Cowdung Ganesh), a colloquial term for a man of no capacity, a man who has desires but has no strength to fulfil them - symbol of a modern man living in the anguish of his own incapacity under the shadow of the passing time :

I have never asked her
I have never dared
I have counted every minute when leaves fall
I have never touched her round-breast
I know the lust of bumble-bee
Yet, nothing has happened so far.

The films continue
The hiring charges for rickshaws remain the same
The minute-hand continues to move on my wrist.
I have seen through the window how leaves fall
The falling of leaves never stopped.

Guruprasad's poems continued to be published throughout the fifties, and continued the poet's main preoccupation with an alienated, uncertain existence, where not only love and love relationship, but also everything else becomes a misnomer, and one has to grope, as if, in darkness for roots. Two other poems of this period, with a different mode, may be referred to. One is *Piknik* (Picnic) and the other is *Chhutira Khara* (The Holiday-Sun). In *Piknik,* to go on a picnic is thought of and is undertaken. But the end is no pleasure, it leaves mental attitudes of loss and emptiness. Similarly *Chhutira Khara* is also about a desire to be a part of soothing and relaxing sunshine in the midst of rural nature and rural environment. But what emerges finally is no relaxation or satisfaction, only the feelings of melancholy and emptiness - "The sand-dunes are quiet/ The village-school, the postman, the cycle-bell/All quiet/ The husking pedals in the fisherman's lane quiet/ No clothes in the washerman's pond / No Thursday decorations, worship and ullulus/ No quarrels between co-wives/ Neither between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law/ Your village our village/ Silent, quiet/ Pale and depressed in this graceless sun."

The poem *Kalapurusha,* first published in 1960, was a good illustration of Guruprasad's poetic power. It is a long poem (about 375 lines) with five sections, but not in the traditional narrative sense, where a subject or a story or an event is elaborated, the type of long narrative poems which Radhanath, Gangadhar, Nilakantha or Mansingh wrote earlier. It is divided into five sections, and the sections are like corridors which branch out from one central point, but instead of moving away they move into each other to finally return to the same central point from which they had started. The

central point or the central theme is a perception of death, or more precisely death-in-life, the modern hell where values do not exist, where the individual-identity is lost and where the protagonist goes through a dry, sterile suffering with no hope of purgation. In one sense the protagonist is the poet himself, but in another sense he is an anonymity. He is both man and woman, he loves and he himself is a victim of love's waste, he wants to escape from sin but himself a sinner, he is alive but even in a physical sense he is dead. *Kalapurusha* is a complex poem and a compact one, and was deeply rooted in the mentality of the post-Independence Oriya urban culture and a remarkable evidence of the supple powers of Oriya idiomatic language. Two examples from the fifth section would be pertinent in this context. Thus initially it is an environment of dryness, lonelines and a deathlike situation - "The silent sand-dunes and sands and sands/ Pale grass and sands and pathless pale earth/ The dull sun overhead and pathless pale sky/ Pale sands and grass and endless thirst and thirst/ Dull gray sands and sands and sky.", and latterly the hope that something may be achieved - "I wait today for the rise of the sun/ And the rise of rains and clouds/ I still search for my birthplace today/ And my first parents and the shine of Arundhati star." In its search for roots *Kalapurusha* goes to such succour that may be obtained in ancient history, mythology and Sastras. But, on the whole, it is a poetic-philosophic perception of the immense futility that plagues the modern life, and an endeavour to what extent the tortured soul could get a release out of it.

The post-*Kalapurusha* poems marked a difference in the poet's perception. Not that the major trends changed. But the tone was no longer as intense as it used to be before. On the other hand, it became milder, became more tolerant and at the same time incorporated newer areas of experience that endeavoured to take the mind away from a surrounding of suffering and loneliness to an open area of goodness and compassion. Such poems written in

a period of 12 to 14 years, till mid-seventies, were *Akrura Ubach* (Thus says Akrura), *Sanjaya O Dhrutarastra Sambad* (A Dialogue between Sanjaya and Dhrutarastra), *Bison Mohanty* (Bison Mohanty), *Christmas Landscape* and *Sidhua* (Sidhua) etc. A good example is *Bison Mohanty*, where the context is partly history and partly popular belief which refers how the idol of Lord Jagannath of Puri was taken away by a Muslim invader and was burnt on the bank of the river Ganga, from where the Lord was recovered in a half-burnt condition by Bison Mohanty and reinstalled at Puri. The poem shows twin conditions, first, a dazed, helpless half-burnt condition of the Lord, and secondly, though with some uncertainty, on the possibilities of resurrection and rebirth, and the final reference to an inability to understand an impenetrable mystery :

> From the deep dark forest of Viswabasu
> From his dark cave
> After all that journey through ages
> After all that fatigue and tiredness
> Oh Lord,
> This repeat again,
> Of which chapter ?
> Of which mythology ?

The poems that Guruprasad wrote after 1975, were also limited in number, and were collected in his second volume *Ascharya Avisar.* They were mostly short poems and generally lacked the sharp emotional intensity of the earlier ones. Otherwise the poetic experience remained as intense and concentrated as before, and additionally the structure became more precise and clearer. At the same time the twin awareness, one for beauty and the allied feelings of happiness and tranquillity, and the other for tiredness, pain and loneliness continued as before. Such poems are, *Pheranta Batara Pakhi* (The Bird of the Return Flight), *Basanta Sahita Ase* (Comes with the Spring) and *Marsh Sahebar*

Krismas (The Christmas of Marsh Sahib), etc. An interesting sequence of this group are two poems, referring to a market-place on the way to Marsaghai from Cuttack, *Nischinta Koili* (Nischinta Koili) and *Nischinta Koile Tiris Barsa Pare* (Nischinta Koili after 30 years) where the poetic-perception moves from one of relaxation and happiness to a tattered mental consciousness of unhappiness and uncertainty. Guruprasad, in about 50 years, has written a total of about 80 poems. But what is surprising none of his poems - not even a single poem, tend to be ignored by the readers. Every poem is illuminated by emotion, power and intelligence, and the poems cumulatively provide an extraordinary creative-analysis of immense futility of the present-day existence. In the tremendous momentum of Guruprasad's poetry not only post-Independence Oriya poetry realized its own identity, but also got established in its own power and maturity.

Bhanuji Rao was the grandson of the poet Madhusudan Rao, and inherited the latter's strong sensitiveness to nature and to music. His style too, disciplined and chiselled, owed much to his grandfather. He took to journalism and teaching, did not marry, and settled in Cuttack in his later life in his family house. His earliest poems were published along with Guruprasad's in *Nutan Kabita* (1955), and his first Independent poetry book was published in 1973, and his second 13 years after, in 1986. The books were entitled *Bisada Eka Rutu* (Melancholy, A Season) and *Nai Arapari* (On the Otherside of the River) and contained 85 and 34 poems respectively - an indication that Rao also wrote sparingly like Guruprasad. But this trend was reversed towards the later part of his career, when he wrote rapidly and frequently, and in a period of about 10,12 years, after 1990, got 13 more books published, and a total of about 450 poems. Some of the books were, *Chandan Banare Eka* (Alone in a Sandalwood Forest, 1994), *Eka Ebam Eka Eka* (Alone and All Alone, 1996), *Haladi Patrara Basna* (The Smell of Turmeric Leaf, 1998) *Antargata Sukha Dukha* (Interior

Weal and Woe, 1999), *Rakta Mansar Kabita* (The Poems of Blood and Flesh, 2000), and *Chitrita Draghima* (The Coloured Longitude, 2001) etc.

Initially, particularly around later fifties and early sixties, Rao's name was often associated with Guruprasad's. But in contrast to the latter's sweeping emotional force, Rao's poems were restrained in tone and were done with a careful attention to form - a pithiness which is absent in Guruprasad's poetic structure. Yet there are similarities between the two, particularly in their attitudes to life and in their understanding of the sensitive individual's alienated identity in the modern world. Rao did not write long poems. But his short poems provide multiple variations of the central theme of instability and loss of fixity. Rao's poems expressed a strong sensitiveness to the beauties of nature. But this was only in appearance, because essentially references to nature also contributed to the poet's inner perception of overpowering disunity and disintegration. Even the poet's continuing references to love and to objects of love, or his attempts to evolve a meaning through multiple images which were seen in almost every poem, were expressive of a poetic desire to come across some sustaining strength on the face of disorder and disunity.

A poem on moon entitled *Janha* (The Moon) from *Bisada Eka Rutu* proceeds as follows - "There is no cloud in the sky/ As if the sky is a sea of light/ And innumerable diamonds of stars are scattered everywhere/ And like a diver the moon gathers them again and again./ Or / The moon is like a silvery boat/ That turns its helm to cross the sea of sky. /Or/ When the night stands leaning against the horizon/ And mist and rain pour from the sky/ And the wind shakes the forest of clouds/ The moon is like a rider of a racing white horse/ That has lost its way in the forest of clouds/ Or/ After that/ When the dark killer-clouds/ Surround the moon/ And flash the knives of lightening/ Then/ I have seen the moon/ Pale with fright/ with a strange gray face." As can be seen, the

initial cloudless sky is replaced by monstrous clouds that prey from each side and 'the sea of light' ends in a strange, fearsome darkness. Elsewhere, in *Andhakar* (Darkness) the poet contemplates on darkness and feels lost in the immensity of darkness surrounding him - "I am in darkness without the sun/ I have lost all my bearings/ Darkness settles on all sides/ Up or down, great darkness reigns." This mood is pervasive in Rao's poems irrespective of whatever the context may be. Thus even when he speaks of love, a similar sense of futility and suffering in a dry, sterile fire can be seen - "I am probably that burnt-day's sun/ A flame in the fire of futility/ And waiting to wash my stains/ In the cool pond of your body.." (*Prapti*, Receipt). Differently, when he refers to Cuttack, the city where he stayed, the tone is one of melancholy and desolation linked with an awareness of the 'last fare well' - "Farewell long sighs/ The stale bread in the morning./ Farewell tasteless tea/ The blind beggar-woman at the crossing./ Farewell rubber balls/ The coloured balloons/ The windy mouth-organs./... Farewell, Mahanadi/ The red sunset on the rampart,/ Farewell, the shadow on the mirror/ Farewell the palė baked-day." (*Bidaya*, Farewell).

Bhanuji's poems show both-excitement and joy in life, including great joy in writing poems as a part of total happiness, as also an intense yet tolerant acceptance of loneliness and aloneness. The title-poem of *Chandana Banare Eka* is a pertinent example :

I will write poems one day
That would be chanted like hymns
in every house
I will decorate their bodies
with miraculous words.
Where the worlds beauty would be entrapped
in a blood-red musicality.....
When poetry comes

It brings explosion in the heart,
In one fulfilled line
The flame of the holy-altar bursts out,
But it did not come,
I hear its foot-falls in my dreams,
It would come, the mind says,
After evening
Clapping the hands of moon
Pressing the fallen leaves on its feet,
It would come.
I remain awake
Alone, all alone, waiting,
To meet it
In lonely sandal-wood forest.

The poet admits his moods, themes and preoccupations in one of his later volumes, *Dhusara Barnamala,* published in 2000.- "I write poems in the ink of blood/ In the agonies streaming from the heart/ Some lips, eyebrows, fascinated palms of hand/ In the excitement of breasts. - hard and soft./ I have tried to touch all that/ I have left home to lose my way in the mist/ To gather star-particles in the sands of seas." (*Mo Nama*, My Name). Bhanuji's tone hardly rises to a pitch. It works steadily but with a remarkable intensity of feeling and sensitiveness. His second book *Nai Arapari* got the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1989. Though Bhanuji wrote sparingly in the beginning, yet towards the later part of his career it was like an 'explosion', and he along with Guruprasad, was responsible for creating a positive taste for new poetry among comparatively younger poets.

Ramakant Rath who comes from Puri district was a member of the Indian Administrative Service, and retired as the Chief Secretary of Orissa. He too, like Guruprasad and Bhanuji, stuck to one genre, that is, poetry. His early poems got published in the contemporary journals towards the end of fifties, and by

mid-seventies he had earned reputation as a new powerful poet. Rath's poetical career has been more or less a steady and continuous one, and he has so far nine poetry-collections. These are, *Ketedinara* (Far-off Days, 1962), *Anek Kothari* (Many Rooms, 1967), *Sandigdha Mrugaya* (The Doubtful Hunt, 1971), *Saptama Rutu* (The Seventh Season, 1977), *Sachitra Andhara* (Coloured Darkness, 1982), *Sri Radha* (Sri Radha, 1985), *Sri Palataka* (The Fugitive, 1996), *Simantabasa* (Staying in the Frontier, 2002) and *Pheri Chanhile* (On Looking Back, 2004). Rath received Sahitya Akademi Award for *Saptama Rutu* in 1978, and Saraswati Samman for *Sri Radha* in 1992. He was the President of Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, for a term (1993-1997), the first Oriya to occupy that position. Like Guruprasad's *Kalapurusha*, he too wrote two long poems, entitled *Bagha Sikara* (The Tiger Hunt, 289 lines) and *Ananta Sayana* (Eternal Sleep, 191 lines), both of which were published in 1967 in *Anek Kothari,* and *Sri Radha* is a sequence of 61 poems on one theme - the human soul's agonizing responses towards a dialectic of fulfilment and futility, seen in the context of Sri Radha's complex psychological responses to Sri Krushna.

Ramakant's first volume *Ketedinara* was mainly full of echoes, imitations as well as soft romantic emotions and rhetorical statements in a reflective-meditative mood. Yet the book as a whole showed a lot of promise. First, it was language - spoken, conversational language in a poetic structure which responded sensitively to intensity of feelings whenever such occasions came. Secondly, the poetic-motivation could be seen being worked out complexly in multiple levels incorporating irony and ambiguity. And finally, at least in some poems, the poetic analysis of experience was such that it was gratifying both to the intellect and emotion. A good example of Rath's poetic power was the poem *Boita Bandana* (Welcoming the Ship). The title is reminiscent of an ancient practice of Orissa when ships and Oriya businessmen returning from commercial transactions abroad across seas, used

to be welcomed home through a ritual ceremony. The theme in the poem develops through a contrast between the deadening artificiality of songs and dances in an evening, in a modern restaurant, with the simple, natural, rejuvenating atmosphere of the sea ("Come to the sea, have patience/ It will not harm you/ It will give you plenty of pleasure.'). The sea accepts the protagonist with a bid to help her, and finally when she is drowned it is only to come back in a new form in a new life to be welcomed with eagerness as ships returning from abroad are welcomed - "After your strange bathing when the returning winds/ Float back your boat to the shore/ Where to welcome you/ The whole world would be waiting eagerly/ In the memory of tears and festering wounds", It is like the 'sea change' in *The Tempest* and the poem is an imaginative apprehension of man's loneliness in symbolic terms.

These aspects are more clearly seen in Rath's next volume *Anek Kothari* where the dominant poetic perceptions relate to loneliness, dryness, sterility and death. Thus, as in *Bagha Sikara*, his longest poem, the theme relates to the protagonist's life through suffering and his futile desire to renew himself in a situation of new power and new strength. The context is provided by three complementary situations - first, about forests, mountains and the movement along the unknown and unfamiliar forest roads, secondly, the human situations in myth and folk-lore, and thirdly, about the social life in clubs, picnics and club-dances. Likewise, the protagonist's attitudes are two-fold - first, a desire to achieve fulfilment, and second, a non-fulfilment of it. Thus tiger becomes a symbol of physically aggressive force as well as the new life-force of regeneration and redemption. It destroys as time destroys. At the same time through destruction it helps at recreation, as the creative word, while counteracting time's waste helps at recreation. Hence the inability of the protagonist to hunt its prey is in ultimate analysis a failure to get at the creative-word which alone is life-giving. The result is sparse possibility of

resurrection or regeneration, and the overpowering awareness is one of loss, ruin, futility and death.

These poetic preoccupations largely continued in Rath's subsequent volumes. But in general they registered a more developed and superior poetic merit, and the language became more idiomatic, compact as well as racy and supple. In short, the element of rhetoric that had dominated Rath's earlier poems got gradually eliminated, and the result was an easier and freer poetic movement. An interesting poem of this phase is *Hrudayasweri* (Dearest), from *Sandigdha Mrugaya,* which apparently depends on a set of contrasts, that is, waking life against life of dreams, past friendship and hope against present emptiness, and those who are dead and forgotten against those else who are alive etc. At the end all that get mixed up, and the perception goes to a level where it narrates a process of ageing which at the same time involves a deep yearning for death. Yet another interesting poem is *Atithisatkar* (Welcoming a Guest) from the same volume, that has a similar perception of death in life. The situation is deeply emotional. But it is conveyed through objective pictures and in a structure of remarkably reticent language which by itself is a sign of strength. Thus the guest is death, it came quietly, in a rainy crowded afternoon :

> He came here yesterday,
> Exactly, timely, four hours ago,
> It was raining...
> ... and past the timing for trains and buses.
> I don't know how he came ...
> And the roads were crowded immensely.

He stayed - how long ? ("He was here for a long time,/ But when I think of it now/ He was here for a twinkling of an eye/ And then he returned through darkness."). The poet sent his son with him,

> And then I sent my son with him,
> To show him the way wherever he wants to go,

The son has gone out for a long time
He has not come back.

The protagonist's awareness of futility and darkness continue intensely in many other poems. Another good example is *Saguna* (Vulture); from Rath's Sahitya Akademi Award winning book *Saptama Rutu.* The poem can be compared in a way with Yeats's *Sailing to Byzantium.* In both the poems, at one level the poets speak of a country with those 'dying generations'. But whereas in Yeats's poem the protagonist could set sail from 'that country' to 'Byzantium', in *Saguna* the escape is not easy because the protagonist cannot avoid the temptations though he knows that they can only lead him to death - "Suddenly the crowd of foxes and dogs/ And loneliness in fields, schools and shops/ And the strange moaning voices from horizon to horizon." But the volume also provides different notes, where preoccupation with 'death' appears to be relaxed, and the poetic perception ranges more freely over contradictory dialectic of existence. Such an example is *Amara Bimarsa Bhagya* (Our Melancholic Fate). The fate is melancholic because it makes the protagonist one with all the 'cold' and 'death' around him - a part of the totality of 'flowers, clouds and horizons', of villages, cities and markets, of 'mountains and sky' etc. as well as the world's 'noise' and 'crowd', where the protagonist is engaged 'to earn money', 'to build houses' and to 'produce children', and in a 'brief dark tunnel' to get the usual 'fruits', that is, 'rheumatic joints', 'hairs as white as jute', and 'unhappy wife' and 'wayward children'. But at a different level he dreams of a mendicant ("a Sanyasi in tattered clothes") and is aware of a new life and new happiness :

When at nights I wake up
And fail to sleep again,
Then the sky appears vast,
Then the trees whisper about sunset,
Then the strange songs float freely from the stars,
And the flowers wet with dew lisp like children.

Sri Radha, that got Saraswati Samman for Ramakant at the national level, the first Oriya writer to get such an award, is a remarkable creative work in the modern Oriya literature. Its sequence of 61 poems, express complex psychological responses of Sri Radha towards Sri Krushna, a context of ancient Vaishnav myth, a traditional background where Gopa, Vrundaban, Jamuna and cowherds and cowherdesses all exist. The considerations of *Sri Radha* have gone beyond the limitations of a myth, neither its ways of expression are like the ways of such ancient poems and songs. Here the myth is a background, a medium, and also has got tied up with the total attitude. Radha as the heroin is the suffering soul of the modern times, that oscillates between the agonies of life and death, and where contradictory perceptions such as, hope and joy and lack of that, the desire to be away from whatever is physical and the incapacity to do that, the sudden realization of grace and the sudden vanishing of it, the restless thoughts about moving corroding time and the awareness about a peaceful still point, and the crowded luxurious life and an endless agony of loneliness, - all that have been integrated in the total organization and in the total attitude of *Sri Radha.* Allied to this Ramakant's capacity to use colloquial and conversational language, and the remarkable use of that language in the expression of complex emotions and feelings, is of a very high order. Ramakant's journey from mid-sixties till the fruition achieved in *Sri Radha,* where the perception moves from an awareness of death towards the realization of a full-life is an extraordinary fine creative document of a talented modern Oriya poet's strength and dimensions.

Sitakant Mahapatra, who comes from undivided Cuttack district, like Ramakant Rath, also worked as a member of the Indian Administrative Service from where he retired as the Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Apart from the Sahitya Akademi Award which he received in 1974, for his poetry-book *Sabdar Akash,* he too, like Ramakant received national recognition,

and received Jnanpith Award in 1995, the third Oriya writer to receive the Award after Gopinath Mohanty and Sachi Rautray. His first poetry book *Dipti O Dwiti* (The Shine and the Glow) was published in 1963, and since then his poetic career, which has been as steady as that of Ramakant, has continued unabated, and he has so far 15 poetry-collections. They are, in addition to *Dipti O Dwiti, Astapadi* (Eight Steps, 1967), *Sabdar Akash* (The Sky of Words, 1971), *Samudra* (The Sea, 1977), *Chitranadi* (The Pictorial River, 1979), *Ara Drusya* (The Other Scene, 1981), *Samayara Seshanama* (The Last Name of Time, 1984), *Kahaku Pucchiba Kaha* (Say, Whom to Ask, 1987), *Chadeire Tu Ki Janu* (Oh Bird, What Do you Know, 1990), *Pheri Asibar Bela* (The Time to Return, 1991), *Barasa Sakala* (The Rainy Morning, 1993), *Padachinha* (The Footprint, 1996), *Mrutyura Asima Dhairjya* (The Infinite Patience of Death, 1997), *Kapatapasa* (The False Dice, 2000) and *Pradakhina* (To Take a Round, 2002) etc.

What may be noted is Sitakant's regularity in writing poems and getting them published - 15 collections in about 40 years, and about more than 500 poems. But the more serious aspect lies in what the poems give - a serious consideration of the factors of existence, to know, understand and experience the dimensions of one's own identity, and the capacity to express that adequately. In fact, the poet's identity is in general the protagonist in the poems and its differing perceptions and considerations have been differently expressed.

Dipti O Dyuti, Sitakant's first poetry-collection, contained a number of his early pieces that had easy, simple structure, more or less in the form of statements. But it also contained a few other poems that had a refreshing degree of sophistication and richness. A good example was *Jara Sabarara Sangita* (The Song of Jara, the Hunter). Based on the mythological situation, where Jara the hunter, killed Sri Krushna, the poem is in the form of Jara's soliloquy, which is in fact a modern man's predicament in a

situation he cannot comprehend. Both an attitude of scepticism as well as faith are present, and the poem's final structure is dependent on their mutual tension. Similarly in another poem of the same volume, *Saharare Grisma* (Summer in the City) mythological situation has been used as the metaphorical point of release from a destructive atmosphere where the sun, the traditional source of life "gnaws with its sharp teeth at the bones of the city." In fact, *Dipti O Dyuti* anticipates some important strains in Sitakant's poetry, particularly his use of myth as a structural element, and secondly, his exploration of one's own identity in an otherwise hostile environment.

These aspects have a good structural combination in Sitakant's next volume *Astapadi.* It has eight long poems, entitled *Mrutyu Nacha* (The Dance of Death), *Mati O Manisha* (The Earth and Man), *Marupathar Swaralipi* (The Notations of a Desert) and *Raktanadi Santarana Pare* (After Crossing the River of Blood) etc., that are organized in the manner of an extended metaphor where the contexts have been borrowed from mythological situations as related to Sri Krushna's story and the Mahabharat, but the perceptions extend to the present time - perceptions of suffering and agony, as well as life's beauty and fullness beyond death and suffering. The perception ranges through time and space as well as through physical, mental and spiritual patterns of living, and in a complementary way through such acts as Krushna's birth, of Kubuja's transformation, or in the intimate relationship with the sea, and one gets released from the fires of hell, and the soul moves away from ugliness and suffering to beauty, fullness and bliss. The poem *Aradrusya* (The Other Scene) from the volume *Aradrusya* reminiscent of such an incident in Achyutananda's *Harivansa,* is a good example of how mythology joins with the protagonist's incomprehensible, amazing perceptions of things, and where the poem moves between two opposite consciousness, one is here and now, physically quantified, and the other a vision,

convincing to the individual but not to others. The poem has a structure in Krushna-myth and refers to Krushna's mother Yasoda's vision of innumerable universes moving inside the mouth of the child Krushna. That is the 'Other Scene' that was seen long ago but still tortures the viewer. Yasoda, the ageing woman who does not know whether to accept it or reject it, and finally resigns to her destiny that the agony will accompany her to the funeral ground. First the vision,

> Suddenly the scene emerged like fire
> The head reeled, got heavy,
> Suddenly the waves of dark sea returned miraculously,
> And in the dark net of black clouds
> The sun, the moon, the planets, stars
> And mountains, and forests
> All together, moving, crowding
> In a heap like fishes.....

Then the doubt that it was an 'illusion', a 'dream', and the doubt was sustained by the scepticism of other people ("They opened his mouth ten times/ Rolled in laughter/ Said, look, how she is mad"). But the agony remains, and the confusion continues, and Yasoda finds that she cannot get rid of the 'vision'. But at the same time the routine life continues, she does her daily chores, she ages, time passes,

> Then the days will flow like water,
> Slowly they will fade
> The husband, son, love, happiness....
> Hair will turn grey
> And unknown to all
> This deep, dark mystery
> Silently, hidden inside me
> Will accompany me to the funeral ground.

This sense of duality is integral in Sitakant's poems. The routine day to day existence is being superimposed by a different

consciousness which supplements and also at the same time changes the nature of the life lived. Thus the reference to myth becomes more than a reference, it becomes both an image and a symbol, a device as well as a part of the poetic understanding to project the poet's moral reaction to the contemporary life.

Sitakant's fourth poetry-collection, *Samudra* (The Sea) shows these aspects to a great advantage. Its three sections, 'Parichaya' (Acquaintance) that speaks of the protagonist's contact with the sea ("I was startled/ When in darkness, outside my room/ I could see your tiny, familiar feet/ and shells and sands") goes over to 'Pratibesi' (Neighbour) where the sea and the protagonist become 'neighbours' - first, in a mood of love ("The sea comes at night and knocks at the back-door/ Like a thief, like a person in love") and secondly, with a sense of fear and death - 'sudden fear at noon', the 'sudden icy embrace in darkness', the fear of 'encroaching sands and shells' into one's 'food and bed'. The last section 'Parinam' (The Conclusion) shows a complete integration with the sea - the end of all contact. It has a number of levels too. First, it is the sea's association with the birth and growth into life of the protagonist, where the sea in liaison with the sun sustains life all along. Secondly, the sea is the devourer, it devours the protagonist like a carnivorous animal which eats flesh and bone- that is, the sea washes away and destroys whatever we cherish and wish to preserve. But the last level is deepest. On the one hand it is 'bottomless hunger', on the other, it is that which is 'bottomless', a complete negation ("From depth to depth/ No sun no stars no planets no moon no fire/ From bottomlessness to bottomlessness/ From darkness to darkness."). The contact is reduced to a point, both physically and mentally, even to no point where nothing exists. These are complex emotions where the feelings for life and death move simultaneously and also integrate with each other.

A singularly interesting collection is a slightly later volume,

Samayar Sesha Nama . The volume contains 32 poems and the poems develop a distinct context in the village and in the family life such as childhood, parents and the wife etc. of the poet. Thematically the contemplation about time, and one's growth through time occupy the centre-stage. At the same time the busy, hectic movement in life is clearly mapped out with a pointer that all that almost always end in loneliness - a loneliness of spirit as well as of existence. Differently the life's many movements are also seen as so many and almost continuous activity of words. The words crowd and dance around, they push through and jostle about. They are eloquent and distinctive. But as in one's own experience so also here, they succeed only to distance and end in utter silence. A good example is the poem *Satru* (The Enemy) from the same volume, where through a physical situation of battle, as well as through the treatment of the father in death-bed, the protagonist's feelings of agony, loss, emptiness and loneliness vis-a-vis his father's death, are powerfully communicated to the reader.

A reading of Sitakant's poems as a whole shows one thing distinctly, that is, his sincerity, a serious attitude to whatever he is writing about, the interest and competence to know and understand the existence around, and the capacity to express that in meaningful form. The protagonists in the poems merge into one, the poet's own self, and what is explored is not autobiographical but a consciousness about life and an awareness about human existence - an awareness that goes through agony, sorrow and despair towards joy and bliss. Related to this, the time is conceived as a unit, which goes through a movement and yet has no movement, and where all time becomes one time, hence the reference to myth and the re-evaluation of tradition. The awareness is both poetic and philosophical, it adds reality to creative word, and when compounded with such references as family, parents, village and rural life, and city and urban living etc., it provides remarkable strength to Sitakant's poetry, and a remarkable dimension to modern Oriya poetry as a whole.

The growth of new poetry in the post-Independence Oriya literary environment was phenomenal. We have seen how beginning with Guruprsad and Bhanuji in the fifties it came over to Ramakant and Sitakant, and by the beginning of seventies it assumed dimensions and proportions of a powerful movement. The earlier poets continued to develop and add to their experiences and perceptions. At the same time newer poets came up in the seventies and by the end of the eighties, severally and cumulatively, together with earlier poets, established the new poetry in full power and substantiality. The poets were, Jagannath Prasad Das (b. 1935), Saurindra Barik (b. 1938), Saubhagya Kumar Mishra (b.1943) and Rajendra Kishore Panda (b. 1944). They all tried to give a shape and identity to the futility of contemporary life, in significant forms which balanced both emotion and intellect. A sense of urbanity, an attitude of irony, frequent use of mythological sequences as structural images, and a continuous involvement with the problems of contemporary existence, are some of the aspects of these poets and their poems, which started to provide, a strong creative response in modern Oriya literature.

Jagannath Prasad Das, who comes from Banapur, creatively a multi-faceted personality - poet, dramatist, story-teller, novelist, painter and art-critic, was a member of Indian Administrative Service from where he took voluntary retirement to devote full time to writing and research, and got himself permanently settled in Delhi. He began his career as a poet with a remarkable first book, entitled *Pratham Purusha* (First Person) that contained 25 poems, and was published in 1971. The book immediately projected Jagannath as a fine poet of the new mode. The subsequent volumes, in the seventies and eighties were, *Anya Sabu Mrutyu* (The Other Deaths, 1976), *Anya Desha Bhinna Samaya* (Another Country, Another Time, 1982), *Jatrara Prathama Pada* (The First Step in the Journey, 1988) and *Annhika* (Diurnal, 1990). The later

volumes were *Sthira Chitra* (The Still Portrait, 1991), *Sacharachar* (All Around, 1994), *Smrutira Sahar* (The City of Memory, 1995) and *Parikrama* (Going Round, 1996). Jagannath wrote steadily and consistently and like his contemporary fellow poets, was intensely aware of loneliness, instability and death on the one hand, and a nourishing, meditative insight on the other. Generally, many of his poems have a context in love, but his poetic directions usually move towards a compact emotional sophistication delicately concerned with time and time's waste.

Thus, poems such as *Priyatama Tamaku* (Beloved, to You) and *Jharaka* (The Window) from *Pratham Purusha* are apparently love poems that express the poet's concern for his beloved or for his love-acquaintances. But the poet's concern in the first poem ends in a final awareness of 'failure', 'despair' and 'emptiness' ("Look at my eyes, at the sparkling emptiness") and in the second, in a sense of loss and complete darkness ("In this dark floor all vanished / And windows closed one by one"). Differently, other poems of this volume which do not deal with love have also similar senses of intense loneliness and emptiness. Thus *Kabacha* (The Talisman), the first poem, speaks of the protagonist's desire to move out of his accustomed circle. But where ? - "That is a strange land, empty, absolute emptiness/ Like my life's lost afternoons./ And innumerable shadows circle in the sky."

The love-motivations are more pronounced in the poems of the second volume. But again, as before, love-emotions form a part of the total poetic complexity where the feelings of love are taken as releasing points towards an awareness of loss, suffering and deathlike existence. For example the first poem *Sandhya Thik Chhata* (Sharp at 6 in the Evening) has a number of aspects. First of all, it is a love-poem where the protagonist has an appointment with his lady at 6 in the evening - "You said we would meet at six/ At sharp six in the evening/ We two/ Outside the town." But the appointment is not an end. It is the releasing point for other

feelings - uncertainty for the protagonist ("from morning to evening, from evening to morning/ My sleep has no dream, no memory, no desire, no hopes"), restlessness for the lady ("Would you search for me excitedly/ In your bed, saree, tresses/ Restlessly/ Putting hand on your breast"- a distant echo of the 18th century poet Upendra Bhanja's lines, and finally a sense of total annihilation for both ("It is the last day of life/ This evening/ And the world ends in final conflagration."). Thus the anxiety for keeping an appointment where two persons meet on a social plane at a lonely place, ends with a situation of union when they join privately at a crowded place - "It's immensely crowded outside the town/All the clocks of the noon have stopped/ Only you and I and evening sharp at six/ And the strange people of the city." Thus at a different level, the 'appointment' takes up sinister implications, as if it is an appointment with 'death'. Elsewhere the poet's awareness of love as well as his awareness of death are intermingled in an emotional compactness as in *Tamaku Janiba* (To Know You) - "When I touch you/ Suddenly the time closes its eyes/ And millions of stars fade from the sky/And long, gray nights of dew and cold scatter everywhere/ And the old darkness surrounds the whole room.'

In Jè Jahar Nirjanata, the last volume published in the seventies, a concern with time and its relationship with the life's process is seen more insistently. At one end, this is an awareness of agony and suffering, the coils of existence at a point of time. At the other end, the coils provide the link with eternity, the point of time expands to a point outside time, and the protagonist acquires a meditative insight into the process of life. The first poem *Kie Janichhi Kete Samaya* (Who Knows What Time) deals with the movement of time from a limited point to limitless eternity and structurally this movement is expressed in the movement of a train ("The train moves on/ From station to station... From platform to platform/ The Express speeds on/ In the early hours of the morning"). This is a continuous movement forward ("No time to

look back") and at a different level the movement is from and to emptiness ("From one horizon to another/ From one emptiness to the next") and from one condition of mind to another ("From consciousness to unconsciousness"). From one point of view this is life's journey and the protagonist cannot escape from this. From another point of view this suggests continuous flow of time which has no beginning and no end, and the protagonist moves along with it with 'fear' and 'without knowledge.' A similar poetic understanding can also be seen in *Tama Sahita Chhaati Ghanta* (Six Hours with You). It has references to train as well as to situations of love in its structure. But it essentially deals with an intensity of experience and contact which the protagonist feels may provide him with exits of escape in the range of passing time.

These trends, that is, a creative reaction to the contemporary conditions of distress and alienation, continued generally in the poems of Jagannath. Thus in a later volume, *Jatrara Prathama Pada,* published towards the end of the eighties, the title-poem, a long poem of 305 lines, shows the protagonist's attempt to establish a link or communication and the futility of such attempt. As the night changes into day, and the day into night, and seasons change, the final impression that remains is the changing time and its power over all. The poem begins with reference to time, night turning into day :

Suddenly it's time
The stars surround the moon
And before the game begins
Avijit finds out its own place,
And between Uttarasadha and Sravana
Innumerable doors of horizon open....

But the mystery and expectation of the beginning ends in the clarity of final perception :

And suddenly there will be time...
When all sounds will be silent

And the last moaning of the wind...
And the proud spires of temples
Show above the narrow horizons of the city
And the heroes and the heroines at the last act
will move into the last sunset.

Annhika, that bagged Sahitya Akademi Award (1992) for Jagannath, showed an interesting dimension to his basic perception related to loss and changing time - a framing in socio-political motivation. The first poem *Samrat* (The Emperor) is an ironical account of how the political power is self-killing and self-destructive and reduces the unit of power to a final non-identifiable situation. Thus the beginning exhortation- "Emperor, go around your palace/ for the last time/ in this interregenum of history/ Before the time of the restless mob/ Standing on the road/ Devours you", ends in a finality - "What gain is it now to look back/ O Emperor,/ Go away/ Before you and your empire/ Vanish from the moving picture/ Go through the secret door of the Queens' apartment/ Go, go into the blind lanes of history". Similarly, the next poem *Mahabharat* shows how the Mahabharat wars are conducted daily in the present conditions, through untruth and lies - "In the daily arenas of drama/ the conch-sounds of sirens/ indicate the beginning of war,/ The sunset is not its end/ It's only the beginning of another war/ That has no rules and ethics/ The only immorality is to get defeated." Latterly, in the same volume, Jagannath expresses his basic understanding of life succinctly :

There is nothing,
The sky is not the sky, the clouds not clouds,
The mornings and evenings all lies
Everything empty, of illusions, of fascination
Without memory without thought
No similarity, no time
Everything beyond vision....

In Jagannath we hear a powerful adult voice, and come across an

alert, rich poetic sensibility and become aware of a remarkable control over form and content.

Saurindra Barik, who comes from Baripada in Mayurbhanj, and worked as a teacher of English in Government Colleges of Orissa, and retired as the Principal, of B.J.B. College, Bhubaneswar, had his first poetry book, entitled *Samanya Kathan* (Ordinary Sayings) published in 1975. Subseqently, he has so far, 11 poetry volumes, such as *Upabharat* (Expressing India, 1981), *Akash Pari Nibida* (As Intense as the Sky, 1985), *Gunugunu Chitrapata* (Buzzing Portraits, 1986), *Luhathun bi Antaranga* (More Intimate than Tears, 1989), *Anubharat* (Denoting India, 1990), *Ame Duhen* (We Together, 1991), *Chahala Chaire Ghadie* (An Hour Under the Shifting Shadow, 1995), *Padha ba Napadha* (You May Read or May Not, 1997), *Haladi Basant* (The Yellow Bird, 1999), *Ama Duhinka Katha,* (About We Two, 2001) and *Jetesabu Bithiku Nei* (All For Bithi, 2003). Saurindra's poetry, in general, has two important direction, one, an exposition of his own reactions, not so much to things, but to attitudes, given to self-expression and exploring one's own identity, and secondly, to objectify the same reactions through such mediums as borrowed from myth, particularly the *Mahabharat,* and through such factors as present in daily life, such as, his much used bicycle, or the intensity of his relationship with his wife. Thus the traditional *Mahabharat* associations go through areas of subtle moods and feelings wherein characters like Duryodhana and Yudhisthira realize at the end how empty all their actions have been; and a banal thing like a bicycle becomes the protagonist's alter ego to ruminate on simple joys of life and the final futility of all action; and the relationship with the wife provides varying moods and adjustment and the perceptions of both happiness and agony. A brief survey of Saurindra's poetry would be pertinent.

For example *Gunugunu Chitrapata,* Saurindra's 4th collection having 41 poems, shows the poet's general pre-

occupation with self-exploration through surrounding reality. The various items of experience have not only been illuminated by the poet's perception, in their turn they also illumine various aspects of the poet's consciousness, which is both real and mysterious, as well as intense with the intensity that a limiting time can provide. Thus this is how the poet refers to an accident on the National Highway where a bullock-cart broke and the cart-driver died :

> That place on the road
> Suddenly became a terrible exhibit.
> Rows of twisted trees
> Bordering unicolour fields of paddy
> And continuous monotony of vehicles
> Like lines of ants.
> Suddenly a spring of excitement broke - an accident.
> .... A man lay in knee-deep of blood,
> Two policemen at a distance,
> Probably he was returning home from fields,
> Sweat on his body
> A relaxed face after labour
> The whistle of happiness on his lips
> And berries in his cloth for his little daughter.
> He was returning in his cart with cart-load of dreams...

In *Luhathun bi Antaranga,* having 55 poems, along with a general awareness of a shifting, alienated personality, there is also a quest for identity - a quiet movement towards conjugal felicity, rural nature and meditation in the temple, all linked together in a complicated structure of beauty and happiness. Thus the sotto voce to the lady (P-29)- "Let us go out for a while/None else with us/ Only you and I/ Like dusty books in a shelf/Side by side in a rickshaw./ Give me a spoon of sugar,/ Even half a spoon,/ Don't say no/ I had no sugar in tea,/ I have not heard the sound of your bangles/ For a long time now." Or, the quiet communion in the temple (p-2)- "Let us go to the temple/ Let us sit there, quietly,/

All day we ran about, rushed/ We asked, we got, no end to that/ No end to poison that streamed into blood./ You forgot me and I you/ But today let's not ask/ Let's not beg for anything,/ We will just sit for an hour/ Quietly." Or, the strange transformation through the yellow spring-bird - "Ah, at every root of my hair/ Your beautiful golden feathers sprout./ I will shadow the sun and the sky with those feathers/ And cover every bit of my dark identity" (P. 104)

Saurindra dealt with the Mahabharat themes mostly in two volumes, *Upabharat* and *Anubharat,* and in both, the emphasis continues to be on the creative exploration of one's own self. Thus, for example, in the later volume, containing 33 poems, the search takes the poet to the mysterious depths of the great epic where the mythical remoteness is brought to immediacy and humanized. Thus Draupadi meditates on her life as a mirror broken into five pieces that reflect five faces, broken, yet one, five ' loneliness'. And Krushna too, as he waits in the forest for the final arrow of the hunter to pierce his legs, thinks of his total work as huge 'loneliness' ("And I am that again/ That great blue emptiness." P.27). And Yudhisthira too, at the end, looking at the great Himavant and recollecting his own long life, hazy with memory, becomes conscious of a great 'emptiness' in the sky and a great thirst in himself :

Then no mountains, no pilgrims, no journey
No mist no storm no blueness
No light or darkness
No beginning or end
As if it is the end of all ends
Emptiness of all emptiness. (*Upabharat,* P.24)

The poems of *Ame Duhen* and *Ama Duhinka Katha,* published under a gap of 10 years, deal with a single reference, that is, with a bicycle, and the poet's relationship with it. The poet himself admits that it is an interesting relationship, but quite

feasible, and since the emphasis is on self-expression and mapping out one's own identity, the difference between animate and inanimate does not matter. Hence the old bicycle of the poet becomes a living entity, and it goes through throes of emotion such as agony, suffering and happiness etc. vis-a-vis his master. Thus, as from the earlier volume, the anxiety and happiness related to the master's lady-love - "I could know from his ways/ Somehow he gets changed/ I too get ready/ To be bored for hours together" (P.29), Or, the flight of imagination related to the lady - "The wind in the mustard field/ The end of her yellow saree flapping in the wind/ I wondered how she would look when she rides a cycle... She would look as if a yellow spring-bird flies" (P.30); Or, the agony of the advancing age - "I can't run as before/ Where is the strength of your legs/ And what has happened to my two wheels ?" (P.4); Or, differently, an awareness of changing times, both for cycle and its master :

Everything has changed
My known world has receded far, very far
My eyes can't see
I can't measure the depth...
The known houses like the mother's lap
Where are they ?
Everywhere monstrous, frightful buildings
And under their feet
We are flattened like shadows at noon
Myself and my master. (*Ama Duhinka Katha*, P.48)

The poet's latest volumes *Jetesabu Bithiku Nei* is an interesting volume in the sense that the consideration goes to the creative word. Bithi may be any girl, or may be the creative word that forms into a pattern in the poet's mind - an unusual volume in the total range of modern Oriya poetry. This is how the poet identifies Bithi -"I only came to know today/ Bithi is nobody, nothing/ Only a poem/ Like a sky full of words of poetry/.... As if

every word is a whirl / And in the restless stillness of that whirligig/ Memory, dreams, truth, and past and future/ All new presents all meanings and meaninglessness/ All together" (P.11). Saurindra's poems have strong modern nuances, particularly vis-a-vis modern life, and his language which appears deceptively simple, has both the elasticity and strength of a mind in complete control of his experiences.

Saubhagya Kumar Mishra, who comes from Ganjam district, worked as Professor of English, in Berhampur University, Berhampur, in South Orissa, and has a total 10 poetry-collections so far. They are *Atmanepadi* (Interior Talks, 1965), *Madhyapadalopi* (Missing the Middle Word 1971), *Nai Pahanra* (Swimming a River, 1973), *Andha Mahumachhi* (Blind Bees, 1977), *Bajrajana* (Bajrajana, 1981), *Dwa Suparna* (Two Birds, 1984), *Manikarnika* (Manikarnika, 1990), *Anyatra* (Elsewhere, 1994), *Charachar* (Everywhere, 1999) and *Ujjayini* (Ujjayini, 2005). Whereas Saubhagya's first volume had romantic conventionalities and echoes from other poets, the mode changed in the second volume where an independent and original insight grew, and by mid-seventies it became the voice of an adult and powerful poet whose understanding of modern life became sharply analytical and perceptive.

Good examples of Saubhagya's poetic powers could be seen in his fourth volume, *Andha Mahumachhi*. There, at a simpler level the themes of two poems, *Sashidei Kanda* (The Tears of Sashidei) and *Darjiling* (Darjeeling) are related to love. The first deals with adultery, the sudden love-affair of a woman on a particular day, and the second, with the desire for a good time at a distant place like Darjeeling. But at a different level we become aware of loss, suffering, agony as the woman in the first poem fails to reconcile with the situation, and again with a sense of loss and death as the protagonist's search for love in the second poem ends in complex emotions of violence and death. Similarly in

Haraprasad (Haraprasad), another poem, which is also related to love, at one level the protagonist is involved in sexy, lustful desires, but at a different level he gropes through his sense of darkness, uncertainty and emptiness, *Kualalumpur* another poem that is not related to love, also conveys this sense of loss and uncertainty quite forcefully. Thus, first of all in the poem it is a particular place to which one can go and come back like going to any city on the globe. But for the protagonist it is not that simple. As he continues to search for the city he slowly comes to improbable, impossible areas till finally Kualalumpur comes to represent life's unknown destination which probably holds out the promise of deliverance from the limited timidity and caution of existence, but essentially becomes a symbol of uncertainty and emptiness- "Our courage is to walk directly from platform-1 to platform-2 / Our caution is to return from platform-2 to platform-1 /Suddenly, somewhere. a train leaves/ Which train ? Where to ? /Kualalumpur, Kualalumpur."

The individual's despair and loneliness as well as the sickening compulsions of living a purposeless, meaningless life through the inevitable details of a routine existence can also be seen in *Andha Mahumachhi*, the title-poem. At one level the blindness of the bee is symbolic. It relates to the denial of vision to the protagonist who blindly gropes through existence in a state of helpless melancholy only to fall a victim, at the end, of the blind time, a time which never makes distinctions and moves on in inexorable relentlessness :

And I am to understand that
We will all have to sleep after some time,
And the smooth time like a snake
will glide over our feet,
And the buds will open into flowers
near our hands.

But the bee's activity is also symbolic. Even though blind it yet

flies in search of honey which is sweet and nourishing. In a way it is a compulsion, a part of the bee's nature, and symbolically honey is to be found everywhere (not in flowers alone), from A to Z ("In lotus, in defeat, in empty firms, in fruits/ In flutes, in quarrels, in mornings, in fear/ In clouds, in temples, in vagina, in journey/... With everybody everywhere/--- Everywhere honey..../In flowers and festering wounds.") This brings in the deeper level where the protagonist's suffering is not the end, it is only a part of a more complex awareness where at the same time grace, sweetness and light exist. As a result even though the vision is denied at one level it is granted at another, and while submitting to time's power one may ultimately grow independent of it.

These trends generally continued in Saubhagya's later volumes too. For example, in *Bajrajana* in a poem like *Katak Jibaku Hele* (If One has to go to Cuttack) the simple desire to go to Cuttack, the most important city of Orissa, is a simple, routine activity, that has, first of all, nothing to do with unnecessary curiosities ("If you want to go to Cuttack/ What necessity to know / At what profit the banana seller at the crossing sells his banana ?... Is it necessary to know/ How the drunkard will return home ?"), and secondly, it ends in a sudden, sharp irony of emptiness- "Besides, that man might be going to Cuttack/ Though he might not have a ticket that far/ All buses go to Cuttack directly/ They do not stop elsewhere/ Even then the vast lap of Cuttack is empty/ And the still sun looks with a wide open mouth." The suggestion is sinister, but the pointer to 'loneliness' is an important factor. In fact, loneliness continues to be a strong factor in Saubhagya's poems, though at times, it takes up additional dimensions. For example in *April* from *Manikarnika*, it becomes a creative loneliness, full of noise and movement, and there is a continuous attempt on the part of the poet to explore the richness inherent in loneliness - "What a strong noise inside/ As if the sea has walked in on bare feet/ .... The half opened door/ And the sunlight like a

sharp segment / Goes to find out/ Whatever lies in darkness/ Beyond my eyes/ Beyond my hands' groupings." Or in a different poem in *Arupa* (Formless) it becomes a creative awareness about the formlessness conceived in terms of physicalities of life- "The morning came/ And there was no body/ The mountains rose at the bird's call/ And the fields, houses, roads/ And the face of man." An interesting poem, apparently in a different mood, was one of Saubhagya's latest poems, entitled *Kabi Guruprasad Mahantinku* (For Guruprasad Mohanty Poet), occasioned after the death of Guruprasad in August, 2004. The poem was in Saubhagya's finest conversational style, an appreciation of Guruprasad's personality and an admission of Saubhagya's debt to him ("Who got that poem written guiding his hand?/ The sea, or yourself ?/ You were as restless and deep as the sea.). But secondly, the references go to three aspects, first, death- "Now the sun is still, the wind, the sea, the *gudakanka* / The wheels of Akrura, the water of Sidhua river.... / Everything still.", second, a painful understanding of the corroding journey through life ("the metaphor of the futile journey through life"), and finally, an awareness of the inexorable 'wheel' that turns eternally, and takes away everything - "Only in that wheel/ That turns continuously / Which no eyes could see/ But which like high flood/ Continues in people's, agony." Saubhagya's poetry provided a powerful adult voice and added to the great substantiality of modern Oriya poetry.

Rajendra Kishor Panda who comes from Batalaga, Sambalpur, has 15 poetry-collections so far, all of which have been collected together in his Complete Works, entitled *Sada Prustha* (White Page), in 2 volumes, in 2003. These include his earliest volumes *Gauna Debata* (Minor God) and *Satadru Aneka* (Many Satadrus), both published in 1977, and latest *Bahubrihi* (Magpie, 1991), and also his two well-known volumes *Sailakalpa* (Like Rock, 1982) that received Sahitya Akademi Award in 1985, and *Annya* (The Unique Lady, 1988). The other volumes are, *Nija Pain*

Nanabaya (A Mad Man for Himself, 1980), *Chaukathare Chirakala* (At the Threshold Eternally, 1981), *Ghunakhyara* (Not even with Contempt), *Anabatara O Annyannya* (No Incarnation and Others), *Bawaharambha* (Beginning with a Bang), *Drohabakya* (Resentful Word), *Duja Nari* (Multiple Woman), *Bairagi Bhramara* (The Mendicant Bee), *Satyottar* (Truthful Answer) and *Bodhi Nava* (Understanding Sky). From the beginning Rajendra's poetry specially distinguished itself by its use of language, first, by a cultivation of spoken rhythm to convey even most personal and sophisticated feelings and thought, and secondly, by its free use of hitherto untapped powers of ancient Oriya words. Thematically, the poetry concerned itself with the details of life lived on the one hand - hence the metaphor of 'whirlpool', and on the other, with a movement away from that towards grace and illumination, the metaphor being the paradoxical situation of the 'west appearing as the east'- a movement towards an integrated and complete view of life. Brief discussions, particularly of the poems of *Sailakalpa* and *Annya,* his two best books, would be pertinent.

Sailakalpa has two sections and a total of 32 poems. The sections are named as *Damra Bhitare Danga* (The Boat in the Whirlpool) and *Paschimasa Purbamaya* (The West Becomes like the East). Apparently the names suggest two different perceptions, one related to the strains in a dangerous situation and the fear of annihilation, and the other to hopes even at the very end, like the western sky assuming the colours of the east and a new dawn. The title-poem *Saila Kalpa* elaborates the theme. It begins with a reference to the ascent - "While ascending/ On a particular sublime height/ You have stopped." But there is also a tendency to go down, like a beast looking for the cave below, like a bird flying to its nest, or like a river that comes down from the mountains to flow into the sea. The protagonist is like the bird, beast, or the river, but he has also to look up at the sky and reckon its nearness ("When

you stopped like stillness/ In that particular sublime height/ How far was it/ To touch the sky ?") and also to reckon the 'strange stillness' of the moment before the 'miraculous final attainment'. The perception ranges through multiple items of life to the increasing conviction that whether death or immortality, one has to climb to the summit and to the finality:

Look, Look -
In the raised hands of God
On his finger-tips
You like the Gobardhana,
And at the summit of Gobardhana
At the highest point
I like a blade of green soft leaf
Standing silently still.
Yes
At that particular height
I have stopped
Waiting for the inevitable thunder.

An ascent to the summit of the mountain, and its reverse a descent to the base, are two related aspects which the poet has used symbolically to denote his understanding of life and to present his point of view. Elsewhere in other poems, such as *Akaspayi* : *Patalsparsi* (Towards the Sky : To the Bottom), *Sikharare Sahabasa* (Co-habitation at the Summit) and *Patan Chirantan* (Fall Eternal) etc., one may note the ramifications of similar attitudes. The poet's central perception is concerned with a sense of movement, a movement upward as well as forward. In the first place it is concerned with the details of life as one lives through it. The metaphor which the poet uses for this is 'whirlpool', and the picture is one about a boat caught in this whirlpool. But secondly, and more importantly, the poet's perception transcends these details to move towards something finer and greater. Hence the paradoxical situation of the west appearing as the east, and the

lights of the west suggesting the end of the day, become like the lights of the east where the dawn breaks. Similarly in another poem from the same volume, entitled *Jibanaprati* (For the Life), which is autobiographical in structure, the poem ends with a prayer to life that the poet be permitted again and again to dance like a small boat in a whirlpool, both in pleasure and agony, with the desire to seek for salvation or escape anywhere anytime.

The other volume *Anya* contains 104 poems, and is divided into 4 sections entitled, 'Adima' (The Beginning), 'Madhyama' (The Middle), 'Antima' (The End) and 'Parama' (The Final). The sections explore different levels of perception, beginning from physical through mental, spiritual and supramental, in the overlapping contexts of nature, myth, ritual, religion, folklore and social habits, These relate to links between a man and a woman, or differently between the 'body' and the 'soul'. Thus on one hand, the protagonist's desires and doubts :

Do you know ?
To my world, to my city
To my lonely house, to my private chamber,
Whenever I see you coming
To my ever-waiting embrace,
I see again how you take leave,
The scenes of
Returning, fading, vanishing....

(*Hrudaya Jadi Samartha Nuha Aau,*
If the Heart is not Capable of)

and on the other, an awareness of expansion, mystery and identity :

She flows like a river
Oh, ocean hold her,
That white swan flies away
Oh, snare her in the sky...
She is fading, give her a body
Half transparent half dark,

Give a name to that nameless
And give her rights everywhere.

(v)

Apart from the poets discussed above, the names of few other powerful poets who distinctly contributed to the new poetry movement in Orissa can be listed. These poets are, Sm. Brahmotri Mohanty (b. 1934), Sarat Chandra Pradhan (b. 1934), Deepak Mishra (b. 1939), Bansidhar Sarangi (b. 1940), Harihar Mishra (b. 1940), Nityanand Nayak (b. 1942), Pramod Mohanty (b. 1942), Phani Mohanty (b. 1944), Haraprasad Das (b. 1945), Sm. Prativa Satpathy (b. 1945), Sm. Manorama Biswal (b. 1947) and Haraprasad Parichha Pattanaik (b. 1953).

Brahmotri Mohanty, who belongs to Puri, had her early poems published in the fifties, but her first poetry-collection entitled *Abatarana* (Descent) was published in 1972. Her subsequent poetry-volumes are, *Drustira Dyuti* (The Shine of the Eyes, 1981), *Stabaka* (Buds, 1988), *Srotaswoti* (The Flowing Stream, 1995), *Setubandh* (Adam's Bridge), and *Uttarana* (Passing Over, 2002), Initially, her poems, in spite of their romantic structure related to love, passion and soft emotions, generally conformed with the new poetry movement and exposed the uncertainty, insecurity and loneliness of a soul in agony, particularly as related to women. Subsequently her poems took a deep spiritual note, and she came over to contemplate on life's meaning, joy and congeniality. An early motif in her poems was 'slip', that is, how one slips and falls, which from a simple physical situation extends to slips in life's situations as well as to mental-slips. A poem related to slip is similarly entitled *Hathat Goda Khasijiba Pare* (After a Sudden Slip) :

Startled I looked around
Hasn't anybody seen it ?
They might have seen it

But likely I haven't seen them...
My forehead sweats
My face becomes red
The sound of cricket in my ears...
I haven't fallen, never -
When did I fall ?
Damn lies -
I just jumped while I walked.

The sentiment of uncertainty one can also note in the poems that deal with love and lover's involvement, such as, the poem entitled Sansati (Suspicion) :

I know it is my great mistake to suspect you,
But to love you without suspicion without anxiety
I know that is also impossible,...
My vision is limited like a bird's eye-view
And release from suspicion is only death to love.

Even in poems that deal with spiritual emotions, the poet sticks to the sentiments of uncertainty and suspicion, as in the following extract from *Stabak* (83) :

I walk in front and you at my back
Yet, even knowing that
Why do I look back again and again ?...
My ears buzz with comments against you
They are enough to unsettle my heart,
Is it possible to continue my love for you.?

Differently, a strong sense of isolation, of contact being cut off, along with an awareness of passing time and growing age, provide important trends in her later poems. Thus, for example, as in *Srotoswoti,* the agony of leaving the old familiar place on the occasion of her husband's retirement - "Tears come to eyes/ On the thought of leaving/ This house, this surrounding/... The drumstick tree in the courtyard asks/ Are you really going leaving me alone?/ The Champak plant in front looks at me with tearful

eyes/... And the moon says/ 'I will meet you at Puri/ But will it be like this / When I look at through your window/ Through chincks in the deodar trees? " (P-14). Similarly, as the protagonist sits at Puri sea-beach with her husband, she first remembers how they sat similarly immediately after their marriage with youthful joy and happiness, but today :

And today ?
After you have retired from service
We have sat near the same sea on the same sea-beach
Like as in the past, sitting side by side,
And I with tearful eyes, in your old age,
Looking for the youth of that day.
And you with your fading eyes
What do you look for in my lean face ? (P.3)

Brahmotri's voice was substantially one of excitement, agony and hope.

Sarat Chandra Pradhan comes from Keonjhar. His first poetry-collection entitled *Nai Aau Machha Hansa O Saras* (River and Fish, Swan and Crane) was published in 1973. His subsequent poetry volumes are, *Uchaisraba* (Uchaisraba, the Divine Horse, 1981), *Asthira Pada* (Restless Feet, 1986), *Jajati* (Jajati, 1991), *Abhaya Bhaya* (Fearless Fear, 1994), *Batrisa Simhasana* (Thirty-Two Throne, 1998), *Bagichar Drusya,* (The Scene in the Garden, 2001) *Nilava Nimantrana,* (The Blue Invitation, 2004) etc. From the beginning Sarat distinguished himself in writing in a new style, a mix of nursery rhyme simplicity and the structural unfamiliarity of a religious hymn, and in small stanzas and half-lines. But that else which also distinguished him equally, was his controlled power to communicate intense personal emotions of joy and happiness with items of soft, delicate nature, memories of rural life, and quick startling mythical references. Thematically, like others, he too dealt with the perceptions of instability and insecurity ("The distorted picture of man devasted by contemporary life", the poet's

Introduction to *Batrisa Simhasana)* and tried to formulate a meaningful understanding from the immense futility around.

Sarat's poetic qualities were seen in his first book. It had 45 poems, and as the title suggests there was a distinct motivation towards nature. To begin with, this was clear from the titles of many of the poems in the volume. They were, to list a few, *Sakalar Staba* (The Hymn of Morning), *Gotie Aswinar Katha* (The Story of an Autumn), *Kathajodi* (Kathajodi), *Nai* (River), *Megha* (Clouds), *Chilika* (Chilika), *Janha* (The Moon), *Samudra* (The Sea), *Machha* (Fish), *Sankhachila* (The White Kite) and *Baisakhar Surya* (The Summer's Sun) etc. In the poems' structure too, there are many direct references to nature. But these references constitute only a step forward. Other emotions and perceptions have joined to expand poetic dimension. The poem *Gotie Gachha* (A Tree) from where the poet has taken the title of his volume is a good example. First, the environment of nature of animals and birds (goat, ram, fish, crane, swan etc.), and of water and vegetation (rivers, tree, grass etc.). Secondly the body - body, eyes, mind, smiles, etc. These are two important aspects, and their mutual relationship can be noted in the structure of the poem. First, they are different, and exist independent of each other. Secondly, they are united, and provide an atmosphere of joy and happiness. Thirdly, all that is a lie, they do not exist, only a mental illusion - "If in the body's spring/ There is the call of the river/ If the body becomes a river/ And the eyes become fishes/ And the mind becomes tree/ In the bright sands of your body/... See, the river's sands shine like gold/ See, the golden swing across the trees./ And the rivers and fishes/ The swans and storks/ In the sea of memory/ Where are they ? Where is the tree ?" .Similarly in another poem from the same volume *Eki Phula* (What's this Flower) the nature's environment as well as references to the body are related on the one hand to movement through the time's circle ('sleeps', 'wakes', 'smiles', 'cries') and on the other, to a realization that all is illusion,

lies ('tiredness and heat', 'all dreams and lies').

In *Nai Au Machha Hansa O Saras* the poetic-personality is alert and sensitive, and what is important is an awareness of time, and an attempt to evaluate that awareness. The same attitude continues in Sarat's subsequent poems in subsequent volumes. Specially in the integration and balancing of varieties of experiences what emerges is a subtle spiritual attitude which is an enriching and releasing level of Sarat's poetry. Thus in the title-poem of *Asthira Pada* we note a request for fulfilment in the context of nature and mythology where personal desires move towards an expansion of spirit - "If you are/Nameless words/ Of shades of sleep/ In the *Sal* forest of the century/ Blue bird of consciousness/ And free and bashful/ Dawn without clouds,/ Give me a little sky and little earth/ And in the circle of words/ Am I that pigmy swan/ Raising its neck and flapping its wings." A later excellent work is *Jajati,* a sequence of poems related to the intense mental suffering of King Jajati of mythology, who bargained his old age against the youth of his son to enjoy the sexual and otherwise benefits of the world only to realize that the desires are never satiated - a picture of modern man's isolation and act of futility, where the fire of suffering drenchs him without purgation - "The fire burns/ Burns in body and mind/ Fire leaps high/ From emptiness to emptiness:/ Where is the end ? Where does it begin ?/ The fire burns in my mind/ I am like a Baitarani river./ I burn in fire/ Across ages/ The load of fire on my back/ And handful of fire on my lap/ ...Everywhere the dance of fire/ All sky all earth/ I sit in the midst of fire/ All day all night" (p.3). Sarat's is a rich voice, and it communicates as much of suffering as grace and tranquillity.

Deepak Mishra who comes from Kendrapara, has been a prolific poet. Beginning from 1961, when his first collection *Asamapika* (Unfinished) was published, he has so far about 16 collections, including such books as, *Nisidha Hrada* (Forbidden Lake, 1970), *NirJana Nakhyatra* (Lonely Star, 1971), *Madhyanara*

Chhai (Shadows at Noon, 1974), *Brutta* (Circle, 1975). *Saptam Pruthibi* (The Seventh World, 1977), *Arana Mainshi* (The Wild Buffallo, 1979), *Sunyatara Sosha* (The Thirst for Emptiness, 1982), *Kapat Suryasta* (The False Sunset, 1984) and *Dhulira Simhasan* (The Throne of Dust) etc., and a comprehensive collection entitled *Nirbachita Kabita* (Select Poems), containing about 160 poems, was published in 2002. It was in the seventies and eighties that Deepak's voice came to be accepted as an important poetic voice concerned with the agonies and futility of modern living. His documentation of poetic-perception was alert and sensitive, and his poetic-consciousness was tinged with mystery and beauty on the one hand, and with feelings related both to life and death on the other.

One of Deepak's early poems dealing with death was *Soka Prastab* (A Condolence), a poem that hypothetically deals with the poet's own cremation, and gives out the poet's realization of death jointly with the realization of his own activities - "I experience death/ Like dark waves in the crowd of people/ I touch death/ Like cotton-like part of the soft finger of my son,/ I fear death/ Like about losing oneself in some naked darkness./ I love death/ Like the craze for new woman everyday..." The sense of loss and depression follows death as in the poem *Abasadar Bimarsa Aranyare* (In the Melancholic Forest of Weariness), which concretizes fatigue and exhaustion - "For us no month is a new month/ No season a new season/ Therefore all water that comes from emptiness above/ Burns/ And burns again and again into fresh long sighs/ And covers the light across the skies/ And my whole body.

Similarly loneliness is also concretized as in the poem *Nirabadhi Naviswas* (Always Hiccup)- "Crossing the states of wind/ Sometime, somehow it comes/ The tired feet of loneliness/ The indifferent hands/ To take rest in my shadow/... I see how loneliness stands in the body of time,/ And at the back he smiles/

Like an intimate friend/ The morning."

But there are other perceptions too, an attempt to get over these, towards joy and a happy relaxation. Two good examples are, one, related to the river Chitrotpala, in the poet's own area (*'Ruk-80'*), and the other related to India in the frame of love for a lady (*Se Keun Bharatvarsa*). Thus in the former the river is transformed into an avenue to lead to happy contemplation :

Whose water reflects the shadows of paddy-flowers
And the shadows of *palasa* and *ketaki*,
And the shadows of multicoloured laughter
of youthful houswives,
And the shadows of tridents and wheels
on the top of temples,
And the shadows of free souls of saints
floating in the wind-
The river where you see such waves
That is Chitrotpala.

The second poem also continues the sense of joy and pleasure :

The river's name is Bharatvarsa
The bird's name is Bharatvarsa
The sky's name is Bharatvarsa
Here all seasons look like your body
Here I see the moon like your face
The faces of all goddesses like lotus flowers
All rivers like your lean waist
All flowers like your smiles,
Here I see everything just like you.

Bansidhar Sarangi comes from Nimapada, Puri district. His *Samaya Asamaya* (Time No Time) containing 71 poems was published in 1977. His subsequent volumes so far are, *Sthabira Aswarohi* (The Infirm Cavalier, 1980), *Sabari Charya* (The Hospitality of the Forest-Woman, 1989), *Chhayadarshana* (Seeing the Shadow, 1995) and *Sunya Samhita O Anyanya Kabita* (The

Songs of Emptiness and Other Poems, 1998). Bansidhar got established as a fine poet in the eighties, and at par with many other contemporary poets, his poems exhibited the tendency to go back to the atmosphere of the ancient mystical poetry, such as the poetic-discourses of the Charya poems of the 10th - 13th centuries, so that the modern futility can be reshaped and reformulated with some amount of serenity and hope. In fact Bansidhar's poetry deals with existence and the uncertainty inherent in the complications of existence, and like his Sabari's desires, (*Sabari* is the woman-figure addressed in Charya poems) the poet's realizations move from the dark area of loneliness to the illumination of truth.

Thus as in *Sabari Charya,* probably the poet's most important volume, Sabari is involved almost in modern terms, as if to provide some relief, if at all, to the poet's diffidence and despair :

Oh, Sabari
Who will stand by you in times of need
Who will do hair-do with peacock feathers
Who will free your mind from disease and suffering
Who will fill your senses with creative emptiness,
Please, tell me,
Who will give voice to your lonely moments,
Whose indifferent footsteps ? (p.3)

Elsewhere, from the same volume, in similar terms, the call for companionship and the attempt to move beyond illusions to fulfilment and tranquillity (p.7)- "O Tripurasundari come/ Overtaking all moats, fences, / I keep waiting for you/ I have rejected ninetynine queens/ Only for you../In dry Niranjana/ In lifeless banyan tree/ In empty boat of black leather/ On the banks of Gomati, Chitrotpala, Sindhu/ In Kasi Ayodha/ Kapilas/ Everywhere your rare existence/ O Sahajsundari/ O disguised mendicant / Take my golden boat/ Beyond seven seas/ To the top of tallest hill/ To the fourth emptiness." In the same vein aspiring

for that point at the top, beyond what is normal and routine, beyond time, in *Tripuramohini Sukta* (Hymns for Tripuramohini, p.12) :

O clever Tripuramohini
Take off peacock feathers from your hair
Beads from your waist,
In this dangerous time
Come :
To the emptiness, great emptiness
To the Gopa city, to the unhurt, unwanted.

In *Chhayadarsan,* too, similar trends continue. Initially we note uncertainty, doubts and agony etc. related to circles of existence - "Who will control the emptiness/ Who will set right the upturned boat/ Who will wake up the listless man/ Who will free the obstructed stream under the broken bridge ?" (p.24). Then a sense of complete physical devastation in the image of floods - "All joined together/ The stray pieces of hands and legs with torn chapals/ The carcass of snakes with dead mongoose..." (p.40). Finally the perception moves beyond, to a free realization of spirit in a reconciliation of contradictions :

When the shadow is seen,
The lotus blooms at the hill-top
The sun rises in the west
The moon rises on the new-moon day
And the immobile moves.
The roots extend to the sky
The branches come down to earth,
Water becomes fire
Fire changes to water,
The shape becomes shapeless
And the form becomes formless, (p.91)

Harihar Mishra, who comes from Puri, is more prolific than Bansidhar, So far, Harihar's books number about thirteen. They are *Sankhanavi* (The Center of the Conch, 1973), *Akhyama Debata*

(The Incapable God, 1978), *Chandrabimba* (The Moon Reflection, 1981), *Lal Kadhar Tapasya* (The Penace of the Red Bud, 1981), *Chahani Mandap* (The Looking Pavilion, 1987), *Sukta Satak* (100 Hymns, 1992), *Swapna Binimaya* (Exchange of Dreams, 1992), *Bhitiri Chandan* (Interior Sandal-Paste, 1994), *Mohini Kanyar Bisa* (The Poison of the Beautiful Damsel, 1994) *Sabda Eka Eka Ekatra* (The Words Alone and Together, 1995), *Darpana Sila* (The Mirroring Stone, 1995), *Sandhya Darsan* (The Evening Viewing, 1998) and *Ardha Manabi* (Half Woman, 2003). Harihar's poetry, at par with his contemporaries, tries to formulate the modern predicament of living ,and attempts to what extent the present sense of emptiness can be given a shape and direction. In him it is a continuous search for truth, to understand the tension that lies between reality and imagination on one hand, and between growth and decay on the other. The poet's deep spiritual attachment to Lord Jagannath (of Puri) is a case in point - an attachment that provides mental attitude and direction to the poet's sensitive perception of the range of modern futility that surrounds us. Many of Harihar's titles of his poetry-volumes are explicitly related to Lord Jagannath, and his rituals and habits. Such titles are 'Sankhanavi', relating to the central place the Lord occupies at Puri, traditionally known as 'Sankha Tirtha'; 'Chahani Mandap' relating to the pavilion where the Lord looks at His consort Sri Lakhmi; 'Bhitiri Chandan', relating to the secret sandal-paste-decoration of the Lord; 'Darpana Sila' relating to the mirroring stone where the Lord looks at His own reflection; and 'Sandhya Darsan', relating to the spectacle of submitting obeisance to the Lord in the evening. Hrihar makes his point explicit in his brief introduction to *Darpana Sila,* where he says : "As if there is a clear stream in the midst of physicalities. In search of truth the poetry climbs to the past. That is the pinnacle for future, which is almost always covered in mist." And again elsewhere in the same introduction- "That is man's tradition, life's practices. When you

invoke them, all appear like opposites. The evolution is to be seen in decay, and to understand the shine of sunrise you have to look at sunset... when things fade."

In an early volume such as *Akhyam Debata* the poet's emotions range in many directions, beginning from a search of one's own identity to such items as Gangua river near Bhubaneswar, and 17th century king-mendicant Gobind Chandra. Initially the poet is resentful that he has to ignore his dreams and youthfulness - "How can I accept that life/ How can I take a tree without green leaves and flowers/ How can I omit dreams of love and youth from my age. (p.4). But finally he settles for what he calls 'part fulfilment'- "Then my identity/ It is only darkness/ A particle of dream/ The earth's heat/ Blue streams/ Open wind./ Neither death/ Nor life/ Freedom for movement/ Movement for freedom/ A long devastating period." (p.94). Ten years later, in *Chahani Mandap,* the emotions differ and become deeper, towards contemplation of the mysteries of existence where life and death touch each other at subtle, sensitive points - "At your strange touch/ At this silence and darkness/ I will discover again/ The ancientness of our absolute contact..." But the hope to rise beyond, to fruition and fulfilment is only a misnomer :

> Return the birds to all directions,
> Inform them that we can't rise
> From this bottomless chasm,
> We can't rise this time,
> This time everything is cold, frozen
> Though there is fire all around.

These trends continued in the poet's later volumes. For example, in the title-poem of *Bhitiri Chandan* an acute sense of uncertainty merges with a groping for spiritual support :

> All my being because of your presence
> Once you leave nothing remains,
> You were in my breathing

And when you left quietly
The whole sky pushed into my eyes. (p.1)

Or elsewhere, in *Sunya Sangam* (Copulation in Emptiness) :

Come, stand before me,
Take away all my waves of dream
from under my feet,
Bury the confidence of my tingling anklets
Under heaps and heaps of sand,
And strip me here, oh, on the Grand Road. (p.19)

Nityanand Nayak who comes from Chiral, Balasore, had his first poetry book *Bidirna Marala* (The Torn Swan) published in 1977. Nayak writes sparingly. His subsequent poetry volumes, so far, are only four. They are *Trasta Padmasana* (Alarmed Padmasana, 1983), *Bhor Akash* (The Morning Sky, 1989), *Kanyakumari* (Kanyakumari, 1999) and *Pheribar Bela* (Time to Return, 2004). In a brief introduction to *Trasta Padmasana,* the poet speaks of his attachment to earth and to places beyond earth, as well as his incapacity to be fully in one or the other, and points out that the highest point to which a poetic perception moves, is one beyond senses, almost like a spiritual trance, when the poetic personality flowers in contact with an absolute awareness. Latterly, in another brief preface to his latest volume *Pheribara Bela* the poet admits the relevance of similar feelings, and points out that in the midst of nature's richness and activity ("grass around, leaves, flowers, rivers and streams, frolicking lambs, half-flying birds, sky, the farmer singing and tilling the farm, distant mountain, paddy fields...") the waves of joy fill all around, and the excitement of this joy first spreads to blood, flesh and veins, then filters into the heart, and finally, in its purity, it moves beyond, higher, to be one with the soul. The structure of Nayak's poetry admits fear and uncertainty at one end, and a strong desire to sublimate all that in a higher, deeper joy.

Thus in Nayak's poetry generally it is nature and nature's

scattered aspects that contribute necessary substantiality to an otherwise empty and alienated self. For example, in the poem *Piknik* (Picnic) from *Bhor Akash* the futile quest for identity is contrasted against a rich nature - "As far as you see/ Only waves of mountains/ And innumerable rows of sal and teak,/ In the middle sprouting green grass/ Small valley/Stop, stop the vehicle/ We will have picnic here.../ Come/ Take this burnt piece of coal/ And inscribe our names, dates and days/ On the ruined lonely walls of the dak bungalow/ That we came to search for a memory/ And a mind tired with age/ In the cold wind scented with wild flowers." (P.41). Elsewhere, in *Pheribara Bela* the mood of death is pervasive : "The load of death on shoulders/ On head and back big load of life/ In front, like the belly of dead dogs/ The illusions of dream,/ And at the back limitless sand/ And limitless sky, like blue colour thirst," (p.65), Or conjointly, in the picture of the Super Cyclone of 1999 - "Suddenly all books and poetry khatas were drowned/ And flower tubs, almirahas, tables and cots/... The demon sea joined hands in time/ Extended the edge of its salty tongue/ In a minute licked/ Thousands of men, cows and green paddy fields" (p.8). But as we have noted, Nayak's perception goes deeper, to a contemplation of things incomprehensible, as in the title-poem of *Kanyakumari,* where the feelings merge with the holy time and place :-

Who waves hands and calls again and again ?
Is it the Rock Memorial,
That floats like eternal bed
In the confluence point of great seas ?
Or in the temple of meditation
Eternally blooming 'Omkar' of Lotus-flowers ?
... Or the strange sunrise
And the red sigh of sunset
Floating in the blue tresses of the Arabian Sea ?

Nayak's poetry is one of great excitement, realized in time, as well as beyond time.

Pramod Mohanty comes from Biridi, Jagatsinghpur district. His poetry books are even fewer than Nayak's. His first book *Kramasa* (To be Continued) was published in 1967. Subsequently, so far, he has only two other books, *Debipada* (The Goddesses Feet, 1981) and *Akata Kata* (Beyond Measurement, 1995). Pramod's concentration is on village vignettes and on a colloquial rural language, and a continuous attempt to move beyond, towards the realization of a formless being. The poet's early poems, published in *Kramasa,* had a good range, from spring-wind and a tree, to such personalities as Gandhi, Gopabandhu and Sirajaudhalla etc. but generally showed a sense of restlessness, diffidence and compassion. Thus the first poem of the volume, entitled *Samudra* (The Sea), which has a reference to the poet's father's death, when the poet was 7, has both helplessness and hope - "The father left me in a small tottering boat/ Gave me a stick of 7 cubits/ I am floating towards the sea of my mother/ With your letter in my pocket/ And looking at the holy Banner that relieves the fallen/ And the Blue Wheel at the top." Elsewhere, in the same volume the poet's sense of helplessness continues with reference to an unrelieved, monotonous, routine life- "Here only the tin chairs/ and the sound of cars' wheels on a wet road,/ The feet forget wherefrom they had come/ And where they would be going./ They forget their own sounds, own footfalls." (p.126).

The two subsequent books, *Devipada* and *Akata Kata* show greater maturity and larger vision - a powerful control of experience and sensibility. The former which contains 53 poems has a number of poems devoted to the references of Devi or Goddess Durga. For example, the first poem, the title-poem, is in the frame of Devi's coming, her worship, and her return, where two levels merge, one, immense physical beauty, like an unparalleled beautiful woman, and the other, immense spiritual perception. Thus the anxiety of waiting ("Because you will come/ The lyre sounds in the voice of the birds at dawn/ And the mind remains excited/

And all eager words remain in hiding") moves to an eagerness of decorating the lady ("I will put on you a rainbow-like necklace/ Golden bangles on the wrist like circles of relationship,/ And like tears of happiness I will spray/ The drops of molten diamond on your forehead/ Like drops of sweat") and then to the wish that she could have stayed for a longer time to provide greater happiness ("If you could have stayed a little more/ In our midst/ The *janhi* flowers would have bloomed before moonlight.") and finally to an awareness of spreading spirituality :

It's difficult to know
When you came when you returned,
You are like a great expanse at the roots
At the umbilical centre of life
From dreams to consciousness
Always, everywhere, both inside and outside. (p.7)

Differently, other feelings also emerge, the feelings for both death and life, and the protagonist's assessment that both can form inevitable parts of a totality of realization. Thus as in the poem *Atithi* (The Guest) from *Akatakata,* the initial ambiguous welcome in physical terms- "I have got this quarters/ Because one day you may come/ Looking for me/ And I have the nameplate hanging on the gate./ Again only for you." finally moves to a point where the guest's coming becomes synonymous with joy and happiness :

There will be no more death when you come,
It's always happiness and happiness only,
Undying fragrance in days and nights... (p.67)

Pramod's strong rural attachment, as also his attachment to the truth of his emotions, have provided strong structural elements to his poetry, and an equally strong poetic voice of joy and excitement.

Phani Mohanty who is from Phakirpada, Balakati, near Bhubaneswar, in contrast to many others, has been quite prolific. His first poetry-collection *Manchitra* (The Map) was published in 1973. Subsequently his other poetry-collections are, *Bidagdha*

Hrudaya (Burnt Heart, 1981), *Swyambar* (The Choice of Bridegroom, 1981), *Priyatama* (Dearest,1988), *Rubi Pain Ketoti Kabita* (1989), *Ruchira Nagara* (The Beautiful City, 1990), *Maya Darpan* (The Magic Mirror, 1990), *Bisad Joga* (The Melancholy-Yoga, 1992), *Ahallya* (Ahallya, 1996), *Chitra Pratima* (Painting like Image, 1998), *Dwitiya Iswar* (The Second God, 2002) and *Puspadhanu* (The Flower Arrow, 2004). Phani's vision is offen inward, and his poetic self is plagued by insecurities and uncertainty wherein such conditions as of life, death and what may happen after death, remain vague and hazy. As one remains in the pitiable existence between attachment and non-attachment one realizes how incompetent one is to be released from the coils of life. Phani's poems are deeply involved in these coils, and through a hesitant tone even from the beginning, they range from happiness and satisfaction to agony and suffering, to what he calls the 'burning fire of life.'

For example, in a slightly later volume *Priyatama,* which is a long poem addressed to the lady-love, we note different moods and perception of the protagonist. The context is one of faith and disbelief, as well as senses of richness and loss, and while a desire for union is never realized, there is a continuous corroding sense of futility :

Your shadows nowhere
No shades in the moonlight,
And yet in the deep forest
I go looking for you
Groping, searching, hoping
That I may get an anklet of yours
Lost long ago...

Or as in *Rubi Pain Ketoti Kabita,* the poet's concern for the lady is as unreal as the unreality of fond desires :

You are here with me
You are also away from me miles away,

You are like a shadow at my back
You are also in front obstructing me...
Let us forget our past
Let us go swimming together, endlessly, in a dream.

In this connection reference may be made to *Maya Darpan,* a very unusual later volume of Phani. It contains 37 portrait-sketches of contemporary people, all known to the poet, not as they are, but as reflected in the 'Magic Mirror', the poet's creative imagination - explorations into intense complications of modern life, wherein almost always the projections move beyond the individual and immediate realities, towards matters more universal, containing hopes and joy, and a new meaning of life. Thus the first poem, dedicated to a sketch of Ramakant Rath, senior poet, may be taken as a portrait of a poet anytime, anywhere- "Full of sweetness and compassion/ In the labyrinth of words./ What a suffering for you poet/ What an inexpressible agony ?/... In what hope/ In what temptation of a cruel possibility/ In what dreams of jewel- studded heavenly abode,/ You are restless, worried, O poet !/ Every moment of yours is melancholic/ Every breath sorrowful." (p.2). Differently, in the sketch of an ambitious youthful leader, now grown aged, tired, in a poem - (in translation) 'Where has gone the Bharatvarsa of your Dreams ?':

Whom should you blame, Rajendra Prasad ?
Whom ?
The drunken power ? Your own fate ? Cruel Gods ?
Whom ?
Do you hear how in the world of silence
The noise, the movement,
The dense, intense movement spreads ?
Do you see how in the invisible distant space
Again and again the comets fall ?
Open your mouth for a while
Let the dumb speak

Kiss the ground below

See how the green earth flowers and blossoms. (p.15)

Satire, though well-meant, is implied in most of the poems of *Maya Darpan*. But a satirical attitude gets more emphasized as we move towards the still later volumes of the poet. *Dwitiya Iswar*, published in 2002, a fine poetry-collection, is a good example. The title poem provides the poet's continuous motivation, that is, a strong groping for joy and happiness along with a good deal of uncertainty and indecision. A second incarnation is projected, but that remains as a hope, never realized - "He comes as an unscheduled guest/ Without any prior intimation/ And vanishes as quickly even before seeing the next sunrise/ Like the flash of electricity/ On the other side of the sky." (p.71). But there are a number of other poems that have quite eloquent socio-political satirical attitudes. A poem entitled *Asa Jiba Ersamaku* (Let's go to Ersama) is a case in point. The context is the Super Cyclone of 1999, that completely devastated the coastal areas of Orissa, in which Ersama was one, probably most-affected. The occasion was a springboard for many unscrupulous persons to emerge as saviours to reap their own benefits. Hence the poem :

Come to the ruined heaps of Ersama,
Father, come,
Come, Champakalal,
The Badshah of the Under World,
Come Jalaludhin,
The arch-villain of the Grand Coalition,
Come, one after another,
All competitors,
At this most appropriate time...
Shed crocodile tears
Give mountains of promises
Declare the dreams of rebuilding
Ersama like Rome,....

Make your pockets hot day and night
Set up Commission after Commission,
Please come, all of you,
One after another... (p.64)

Phani's poems have a distinction of their own, particularly their force, sweep and intensity make them fine poetic creations in recent times in Oriya.

Haraprasad Das is from Gajrajpur, in the Cuttack district. His first poetry-collection containing 52 poems came out in 1978. It was entitled *Alokita Banabasa* (Illuminated Banishment). But his second poetry-volume entitled *Mantrapatha* (Reciting Hymns) was published 13 years after in 1991. His subsequent volumes, so far, are *Garvagruha* (The Inner Sanctum, 1993), *Duratwar Bhrama* (The Illusion of Distance, 1994), *Artha Sahita Satruta* (Enemical with Finance, 1996), *Khuni Apsara* (The Murderous Divine Damsel, 1999), *Desha* (Country, 1999), and *Sthala Purana* (The Earth's Myth, 2002). Haraprasad's poetry showed some immediate difference from the prevailing modern Oriya poetry. First, it did not generally take up myth or mythical references as essential parts of the poetic structure. Secondly, it used part sentences to make necessary effect. Thirdly, it developed a philosophy of its own-philosophy given to joy, hope and grace. Haraprasad's poetry was contemplative and meditative at one level, and at the other, it was sharp and subtle, and developed a perception of total integrity.

Haraprasad's early poems published in *Alokita Banabasa* had a certain amount of bravado about them. Yet they also showed a sharp awareness of uncertainties about life, as in the poem *Mahabharat* with a contextual reference to the Mahabharat war- "The bodies of hundreds of warriors floated in the river of blood/ .... The sun did not have light/ No stars in the enemy's camp/ Which suns / Which stars?/ Which spears ?/ In banks of which rivers ?" (P.37). Thirteen years later the attitude of bravado was by-passed, and instead the organisational control became greater, the tenor

was more integrated, and the perception ranged more freely and outwardly around senses of inadequacy and incapacity. Thus in *Parichaya* (Identity) from *Mantrapatha* the relationship is viewed with a hesitant note- "They can't know each other/ The directions change in the blindness of identity/ ...Ah, they will meet/ May be after many years/ Some day/ Under the holy banyan of truth/ Or may be in some coffee house/ At 7 in the evening." (P.3). Similarly as in *Padosi* (Neighbour) from *Garvagruha,* the awareness of a similar tenuous relationship continues- "We would be together in a boat in a river/ You would be pushing me off at an opportune moment/ And I'd be doing the same to you/ There would be nothing but to laugh in the mid-river." Or, an awareness of life's finality- "I would not be there in the morning/..... Listen, I am going to the other side of the road/ That means/ I'm going back to wherefrom I came." Differently, the poems also suggest a subtle spiritual direction, as in *Ghatire Iswar* (God in the Mountain Pass):

Is he that person
Who yesterday before it was seven
Threw the old wrapper of the star-world
On the body of the mustard-fields ?

The nineties provided a remarkable flowering of Haraprasad's poetry when his poetic modes as well as his poetic style got established, and earned for him the recognition of a fine modern poet, including Sahitya Akademi recognition in 1999, for *Garvagruha. Duratwar Bhrama* had 48 poems, where perceptions ranged from attachment and suffering to loneliness and lack of movement, and even to a sense of finality in life. Initially the poet speaks about his process of creativity that is like a purgation through reality - "In a mood of hesitation/ I had to recreate/ The old words in new form/ To burn my foolish imagination/ And purge it in the fire of reality" (p.2), and goes over to a condition where there is no movement- "Where should I go now ?/ It looks like a light/ It is not light, /It seems as if I have reached/ But no/ I am

where I was/I haven't moved even a step." (p.55), and lastly to a resignation to finality - "Therefore in the valley of full stop/ One has to stay throughout his life / There may be one or two words after fullstop/ Calling again and again from the other side/ Like light from the illusion of mist/ But I would have no courage to move." (p.61). So too, in *Khuni Apsara,* a sense of incapacity and resignation to an inadequate helpless condition- "I can't again sing that song/ Never ever/ You may look more and more beautiful everyday/ I may also stay as such for an age or two/ Even though nobody asks why is that torn cloth on that helpless tree/.... No, I can't sing that song/ Not even at 2 o' clock at night when cuckoo sings." (P.99)

Desha, a later volume, is an usual one, a continuous one, in 230 pages, and in a number of sequences. Symbolically, the 'country' is taken as a take-off point round which the attitudes have been arranged to explore one's own identity and consciousness through the pattern of changing times after Independence. A good example is the sequence 69 (P.137). The poem has many levels. First of all, it shows how all dreams of the protagonist are broken. They lie scattered, as if in a battle-field, in a condition of defeat and helplessness, all lost. Secondly, the question arises, is everything lost ? Isn't there some hope left ? At the third level, the assurance comes, no, it is not a total loss. There is some hope. What has been lost is only one's infirmities. But immediately the next level comes, no, the hope is a misnomer. One cannot see, cannot grope for the correct point ("Oh my country I can't see anything/I don't know in which corner of this vast field, in which stone, my destiny is inscribed"). *Sthala Purana,* the poet's latest, contains 57 poems, and continues the poet's control over emotion and language as before, and continues too, the attitudes, trends and perception manifested in the earlier poems as intensely. A good example is *Ersamar Kavya* (The Poetry of Ersama), the longest poem in the volume, related to the Super Cyclone of 1999,

comparable to Phani's poem earlier noted. The poem is a remarkable one, both in its exposition of emotion and thematic organisation, and shows compassion, suffering and helplessness at the immense human misery on the one hand, and anger and resentment at the human expediency on the other, and the final possibility that even the greatest devastation may lead to some hope and strength at times :

The earth's debt is paid off like this
This is the way the world is created
And this is how we say
Thank you, great Deluge. (p.121).

Haraprasad's poetry added new and refreshing dimensions to contemporary Oriya poetry - a new and unique body of poetry.

Prativa Satpathy comes from Satyabhamapur, in the Cuttack district and her first poetry book *Asta Janhar Eliji* (The Elegy of the Setting Moon) was published in 1969. Her subsequent poetry-collections are, *Grasta Samaya* (Eclipsed Time, 1974), *Sahada Sundari* (The Sahada Beauty, 1978) *Niyata Basudha* (Always Earth, 1980), *Nimise Akhyar* (The Moment's Word, 1985), *Mahamegha* (The Mega Clouds, 1988), *Sabari* (The Sabar Woman, 1991) and *Tanmaya Dhuli* (Engrossed Dust, 1996) that secured Sahitya Akademi Award for her in 2001. Prativa's poetry provides fine examples of how best the continuing tension between time and existence can be resolved. The coils of life lead to a desire of escape for which the protagonist keeps on waiting. But when the hopes of release materialize one is not sure if that is to be accepted. In fact Prativa's poetry throbs with an underlying current of uncertainty and insecurity and with twin desires of escape and involvement.

Grasta Samaya, Prativa's second collection, containing poems written in early seventies, shows the controlled-power of a new poet - control over emotion and language. This was evident from the first poem of the collection, entitled *Antarlipi* (The Interior

Script). The poem deals with eagerness for contact that does not materialize. It begins with an attempt to communicate- "A dull afternoon/ The stupid sparrow is conversing with its wife/ The suppressed moaning songs from the radio/ I now write this letter to you." But it ends with a sense of loneliness - "You have returned/ I don't know whom to write ?/ The late afternoon looks through the eyes of a tired traveller". Similarly the title-poem is a sharp exposition of the poet's feelings of failure and despair, from outside nature to one's own mental condition - "The afternoon like winter dawn/ The yellow pale sun like the pale look of the dying moon/ Like the lonely crow's caws/ The call of the lonely potter-bird/ ...The saline water in thirst/ The adulterated wind in breath." (P.39). The subsequent volumes such as *Sahada Sundari, Niyata Basudha* and *Nimise Akhyara* develop on the basic trends of *Grasta Samaya* and show greater poetic-power in formulating the emotions in significant form.

The title-poem of *Sahada Sundari* shows how the protagonist's sense of emptiness is spread everywhere, and the succour she needs hardly comes- "What am I/ They are more important/ Trees and creepers, sky and wind/ All colours of evening/ The smiling faces of morning./ They fail to calm me/ My stupid pain born of whistling emptiness." At the same time the hope of release is a misnomer- "There is nothing more for us/ We will never hear the resounding noise/ Of the wheels of the divine chariot". So too, in *Niyata Basudha.* the same failure to reach- "When I reached there running/ You were not there/ Your music I couldn't hear/ Nor your beautiful eyebrows trembled in emotion/ .... I went running in great glee to you/ Crossed three hundred fifty miles/ A thin cloud in the sky/ Like a small white handkerchief fluttered/ But you were not there" (P.14). At the same time sense of pain and suffering could also be seen as strong motivations in many poems, even including a semi-autobiographical poem such as the title-poem (P.29) where the emphasis is on the joys of

growing up, or a poem like *Bidulata* (p.31) where social ostracism vis-a-vis a woman's helplessness is narrated. So in *Nimise Akhyara* too, similar motivations continue, that is, the desire to communicate that fails, the desire to escape that ends in fear and compromise, a sudden, disturbing awareness of beauty that is hardly realized, and all through a gnawing sense of loneliness, aloneness and helplessness. Thus, as in *Marichika* (The Mirage):

Somebody blindfolded me when I learnt to walk,
And left me here, in this hot sand -
The sun, the thirst, the sweat and the distress
The shadowless cruelty
The intimacy of thorns
The barren clouds in the sky
The embrace of sands round horizons
And the weird moaning in monstrous laughter. (P.35)

Latterly, in *Mahamegha*, published towards the end of eighties, we also note the twin trends, where a contemplative perception is joined with a sense of past and present uncertainties:

Is that new woman
A new river that gropes through forest ?
In her transparent blue eyes
The dreams shoot and leaves appear,
But never, never, she looks at me,
Whenever my hands go to touch her
They return unfulfilled...
Oh, whose form is that
Like first clouds in the sky the floating body,
Eyes like the sun and the moon
Lips like lotus-petals
Ears like pomegranate flowers
And forest-dark hair
And wind restless in fragrance... (*Mahamegha*, p. 46)

Prativa's two latest books, published in the nineties, continued the

poet's acute sense of distress and an equally acute perception of human predicament, Yet an intense shift was equally evident, a shift beyond distress, towards a sense of release and new life, towards almost a spiritual perception. *Sabari,* a long poem, with 4 sections and 30 sequences, in a mythological frame, where Sabari, the forest-woman, waits for Sri Ramchandra, gets his contact, and lives in memory of that joyous moment - a fine example of how one can get a release from constraining human predicament. Thus his coming brings an aura of great happiness- "The trees showered flowers, / Leaves in bowed head received the drops of rain water,/ The flowing clouds poured sweetness,/ And when the sword of lightening moved across the sky/ Light flashed on me, on my peacock-self." (p.33). This is felt deeper in *Tanmaya Dhuli,* where the perception is almost contradicted in the protagonist's own self :

> What brightness is this ?
> What light is this
> How it blossomed in myself !
> How it dawned inside me !
> In strange awakening,
> From top to toe
> Streams of radiance sprouted...(P.26)

Manorama Biswal Mahapatra, who belongs to Balasore district but is settled in Bhubaneswar, began her poetic career in early sixties, when her early poetry books, entitled *Kisalaya* (Bud) and *Bratati* (Creeper) dealing with love, nature and soft feminine sentiments, were published in 1963 and 1966 respectively, before she was 20. Her first important poetry-collection was significantly, *Phulafutar Muhurtta* (The Blossoming Time, 1978) and subsequently, so far, 9 more poetry-collections, entitled, *Smruti Srabana O Pratibimba* (Memory, Rains and Reflections, 1978), *Swatilagna* (The Moment of Swati, 1979), *Janharatira Muhan* (The Face of Moonlit Night, 1981), *Ekla Naira Gita* (The Song of the Lonely River, 1990), *Thare Khali Dakidele* (To Call Just Once,

1992), *Sabdara Pratima* (The Images of Words, 1994), *Phalguni Tithira Jhia* (The Daughter of the Phalguni Lunar Day, 1998), *Biswasara Padmabana* (The Lotus Forest of Faith, 1999) and *Sajala Meghara Chhai* (The Shadow of Watery Clouds, 2002). Some of the main trends of Manorama's poetry continue to be her love for nature, nature's beauty, the memories of her village and people around her, as well as in a general understanding of both the joys and realities of life, and a gnawing sensation, specially in the later poems, of the passage of time. More particularly, the Baliapal area, adjoining the sea in north Orissa (Balasore), the area to which she belonged, and which was subsequently taken over by the Govt. of India for Defence project, remained both a bright and sore point in her poetry.

A representative poem of Manorama expressing joy, excitement and anxiety, involving nature with feelings of strangeness, would be the title-poem of *Swati Lagna* :

> The message of your coming is everywhere
> In air, in leaves, in flowers.
> The message in the sky, in the wind.
> And in the sensitive ponds of the mind...
> For your coming the entire time is lightened
> In a sparkling spilling fragrant moment.

Similar feelings of joy and happiness seasoned with remorse and melancholy, almost like a personal loss, can be noted in the poet's memories as related to her village - "After a long time/ After many years/ Once again,/ I have come, to the village/ And to this earth.,/ I was dreaming of the village/I was asking all around/ Again and again/... Now coming to the village/ What do I see ?/ Dry, like a stunted tree/ And the dry, meaningless smiles of children/ And painful, helpless look of old men/... I stood silently, in darkness, alone/ And listened to the piercing noise of a night-bird/Flying in the sky" *(Thare Khali Dakidela,* P.19). In later volumes, such as *Phalguni Tithira Jhia* and *Biswasara Padmabana* etc. the poetic

emotions move from a contemplation of nature and a sense of loss, towards reflections on time's passage and the futility of living through the realities of life. Thus, a futile desire for communication that was never achieved - "Come, let's talk to each other/ Of weal and woe/ Before the time is over/ What else is here ?/ We are only groping in darkness". Or, the futile desire for a settled habitation that never became possible - "Where is my home ?/ In Ganga/ In Gaya/ Or in Triveni ?/ I tried to have my house like a bird's nest/ I failed. / As I lived in dreams/ Lived with memories/ I broke in helplessness/ What can a man do/ How can he get all things done ?" *(Phalguni Tithira Jhia,* P.31). At the same time an awareness of passing time dominates - an awareness that time is over, or is soon going to be over. Thus, as in the poem *Ebe Pheribaku Heba* (Now to Return) from *Biswasara Padmabana :*

How to return from here.
To finish soon all the dreams
(tied in silk threads,)
All my calculations all my pride
To be erased one by one from the mind,
Now the time to return...

From the seventies till the end of the century the progress of Manorama's poetic emotions, almost at par with many other poets we have discussed so far, has been a steady one, from sensitiveness to nature, to sensitiveness to factors of life, from joy and excitement to a contemplation of what can or cannot be achieved in life. Manorama also wrote rhymes for children as well as songs of love - love's joys and pains (a good example is her latest volume, *Sajala Meghara Chhai).* Together, it has been a highly, adorable poetic-personality, and equally remarkable and significant.

Haraprasad Parichha Pattanaik's first poetry work, a minor work, entitled *Pinki Katha,* was published in 1976. His first relevant poetry-collection was *Eka Eka Sanyasi* (The Mendicant Alone). It was published in 1981. His subsequent poetry volumes were

Athaya Surya (Restless Sun, 1990), *Ayushman Samaya* (Long-lived Time, 1995), *Sabu Andhara Aji Ratire* (All Darkness at Today's Night, 1996), and the latest, *Jibanjangha* (The Life's Shank, 2004). Haraprasad's poems show a good range of emotions. From simple items of living linked with nature and rural life he goes over to complete commutation of emotions and to a contemplation of attitudes both towards life and death. The poem *Tume Khub Manepada Vikrampur* (You Often Come to My Mind Vikrampur) from *Ayushman Samaya,* is an interesting example. Vikrampur is the poet's own village in south Orissa, and structurally the poem has twin directions, one in memory, to a past life of youthfulness and happiness, and the other, reflection of present unhappy emotions. The poem begins with a pointer to the present 'deadness'- "Listen, my life/ All heat gone/ Wealth, people, youth dead, lost / Dull dreams / And heaps of failure." But Vikrampur provides an exciting memory- 'the cool water of Chilika', 'the restless tribe of birds', 'eternal rows of palm-trees', and "Green golden houses full of wealth/The wink of moon in the diamond sky/ The song of birds in the forests/ And Vikrampur, you come again and again / You are the end of all creation." But the end-result is only a desire, a memory, airy nothing, and the present painful emotions dominate.

In fact, to search for a place or even a person who may provide a still-point of happiness and assurance, and a continuous failure to that effect, is almost a recurrent motif in the poet. Thus in the poem, significantly entitled, *Chihni Heuthiba Atita Haji Jaithiba Rasta* (The Recognized Past and the Lost Road) from the same volume, the poem begins with a sense of uncertainty- "Whatever remained wherever/ It remained like soot/ In another assurance," and the futile search continues :

With an assurance to get in return
I gave my mind to one,
I could not get back anything
Now the road to that house is lost...

....

I think while searching for one
I will have to go to Phulbani,
I will search the whole district
And with my ashen hands
I will let my grateful moments
Hang in walls in front -
A complex absence of our relationship.

So too, in the same volume, in the frame of nature, the reference is to violence and death - "To wind like a question of breathing/ Someone should ask/ Why the trees dry up/ Why some stars like comets die in intolerable stench/ Why the scents of wet sands in the sea-beach shy away/... Therefore in white or yellow colour/ Wind flows slowly or swiftly/ In grass, in earth, in trees/ In light, in darkness, in rainy nights/ And swallows all our roots" (p. 61). Or, elsewhere, environment of destruction initiated through the medium of storm - "The wind pursued all/ Sands, dust, branches of trees, dry leaves/ The thatch, asbestos, tent, lightpost/ At places, rickshaws and cabins/ They all flew like drunken birds with the wind.../ ..." (P.53)

Parichha Pattanaik's poems, written in the mid-nineties and published in two consecutive volumes. *Ayusman Samaya* and *Sabu Andhara Aji Ratire* strongly expressed his emotions and attitudes at par with his contemporary and earlier new Oriya poets - a keen sensitiveness to changing facets of life, and a groping desire to hold on to some substantiality in the overpowering flux. In the later volume we can also note a range of emotions, such as, related to passage of time, to hope for dreams that never come, and to mental uncertainty, loneliness and loss- "I can't understand anything/ I understand only that I am lost/ Whatever long past I had/ They were in the Sravan's sun, when the flowers bloomed/ The rest, all future, now in darkness/All my secret desires/ Fade and fall before the sunrise/ Of the pitiable curses of the dying darkness". (P.51)

What we have mapped so far is the main tradition of post-Independence Oriya poetry- the new poetry that began in the fifties after Independence, with later poems of Sachi Rautray and poems of Guruprasad Mohanty. In addition to the poets we have discussed above, there are many more who belong to this tradition and have helped to strengthen it in their own ways. An awareness of reality, and a desire to relate this to a deeper awareness of existence, along with a desire to put all that in a meaningful structure, have what characterized the poetry of these poets. It is a long way from the rhyming and mellifluous structure of the pre-Independence days to a spoken, conversational language of everyday speech, and from a uni-dimensional concentration with familiar, domestic desires to a mocking, ironical multidimensional attitude towards life. Modern Oriya poetry did not only take a new turn, but in the course of time, in the decades following Independence, acquired a new maturity and a strong identity.

The ground was so fertilized, particularly in the eighties and nineties, that we notice a spurt of new poets and new poetry books. This was in addition to the established poets who continued to be active, and whose new and newer volumes continued to be published. The enthusiasm for poetry was catching, both in the new and younger poets as well as in the receptive readership. The publishing houses in Cuttack also participated in the promotion of poetry and gave berth to new entrants along with the established ones. At the same time the poets themselves published their own poetry books and often interacted with each other in literary meetings and in poetry-reading sessions. In a way this has been the result of the strong new poetry movement in Orissa after Independence that provided an identity and assurance to the sensitive younger generations motivated towards poetry.

The body of poetry produced at the turn of the century, particularly from the eighties onwards, is apparently large and

includes many poets, both men and women, younger in age in comparison to the earlier poets, and mostly born after Independence or arround Independence. In general awareness and attitudes they have links with the earlier poets, and as regards the world-view and the vision of life, they have many similarities. But a real assessment of this body of poetry, and to what extent the poets succeed in formulating their experiences, is yet to be made. In fact, what we confront is not so much of achieved creativity, but a good deal of ability, of a newer realisation at par with the changing times and changing sensibility at the turn of the century. We list below some of the relatively more important authors and some of their books.

They are, chronologically, in terms of years of birth, Dilip Das (b.1942; *Bilupta Samrajya,* Late Empire, 1980, *Pakhitie Basichhi Dalare Chhai Tara Pokhari Jalare*, A Bird Sits on a Branch its Shadaw on Water 1981; *Suduraru Anek Dura,* More Distant than the Distance, 1996, etc.). Pravakar Satpathy (b.1942; *Sabuthi Kabita,* Poetry Everywhere, 1990; *Odamati,* Wet Earth, 1999; *Madhya Ratri,* Midnight, 2000; and *Simhasana,* The Throne, 2001 etc.), Niranjan Padhi (b.1943; *Sunya Nirabata,* Silent Emptiness, 1988; *Mu Jadi* Hajijaye, If I get Lost, 1989; *Kaffinara Swora,* The Voice of Coffin, 1990 etc.), Sadasiv Das (b.1945;) *Akhyansa Draghima,* Latitude Langitude, 1992; *Kala Nirabadhi,* Time Eternal 1993; *Nitya Padmatola,* Daily Snake-Charmer's Song, 1994 etc.), Sashi Bhusan Biswal (b.1946; *Udasa Meghara Desha,* The Land of Languid Clouds, 2000; *Sara Rati Janha Rati,* The Whole Night Moonlight, 2001; and *Kanchanjunghar Megha,* The Clouds of Kanchanjungha, 2003 etc.), Asutosh Parida (b.1946, *Ipsita Krodha,* The Desired Wrath, 1987; *Chandala,* The Chandala, 1991; *Raktabarna Bali,* Blood-Coloured Sands, 2002 etc.), Sm. Mamata Das (b.1947; *Naimisharanya,* Naimisharanya, 1981; *Abaka Swarga,* The Amazed Heaven, 1989; *Ujjala Upabana,* The Bright Garden, 1996; and *Nila Nirvapana,* The Blue Extinction,

2000 etc.), Nilamoni Parida (b.1948; *Manorama Kahani,* Manorama's Tale, 1995; *Bhuloka,* The Area of Earth, 1999; *Raktanadi Santarana O Anyanya Kabita,* Crossing. The River of Blood and Other Poems, 1999 etc.), Rajkishor Das (b.1948; *Bisarna Akasha,* Pale Sky, 1990; *Majhi Nai,* The Mid-River, 1991 etc.), Amaresh Pattanaik (b.1950; *Manisha Angule,* A Finger-long Man, 1981; *Sandhi Bisandhi,* Jointing and Unjointing, 1989; and *Abudha Garuda,* Unwise Hawk, 1994 etc.), Bipin Nayak (b.1950; *Padasabda,* Footsteps, 1993 etc.), Suvendu Mund (b.1951, *Sabda Nisabda,* Sound and Silence, 1981; *Muhurta Tie Mohini,* Oh, Lady, Just a Moment, 1987; and *Sabdaphena,* The Word-Hive 1998, etc.), Smt. Sarojini Sarangi (b.1951, *Suryasnan,* Sun- Drenched, 1988; *Akhi Katha Kahe,* The Eyes speak, 1991; *Swetambari,* The White-Coloured, 1994 etc.), Saubhagyabanta Maharana (b.1951, *Sagua Khetara Sahara,* The City of Green Fields, 1988, *Anabruta Ajnatabasa,* Open Banishment, 1995; and *Angikara,* Agreement, 1996, etc)., Sm. Aparna Mohanty (b.1952; *Abayakta Atmiyata,* Unspoken Intimacy, 1991; *Asati,* The Unchaste Woman, 1993; *Nisabdare,* In Silence, 1997; *Atithi,* The Guest, 1997; and *Purnatama,* In Fullness, 2002 etc.), Sangram Jena (b.1952; *Basaghara,* Habitation, 1999 etc.), Aswini Kumar Mishra (b.1953; *Chandra Bandhani,* The Moon-Knot, 1987; *Sakhyatara Dina,* The Interview-Day, 1991; *Banabas O Anyanya Kabita,* Banishment and Other Poems, 1995; *Kathopakathan,* Dialogues, 1996 and *Aranya Sangita,* The Songs of the Forest, 1997 etc.), Girija Kumar Baliarsingh (b. 1953; *Krauncha Mithuna,* A Pair of Storks, 1982; *Dairira Sayeri,* The Songs of a Dairy, 2002; *Bharatvarsa,* Bharatvarsa, 2003; and *Chaturdasira Chandra,* The Moon of the Fourteenth Night, 2005 etc.), Bhikari Dhal (b.1954; *Samayara Swora,* The Voice of Time, 1986; *Eka Eka Sabudina,* Alone Everyday, 1988; *Samaya Bhala Nahin,* Time Not Good, 1994; *Pakhira Sakala Gita,* The Bird's Morning Song, 2000 etc.), Hrusikesh Mallick (b.1954; *Dhana Saunta Jhia,* Paddy-Picking

Girl, 1988; *Ujuda Khetara Geeta.* The Song of the Ruined Field, 1991; *Ghata Akasha,* The Covered Sky, 1998; *Dharmapatni,* Wedded Wife, 2000 and *Sakhi Chandra Surya,* The Sun and the Moon as Witnesses, 2003 etc.), Trithananda Mishra (b. 1955; *Pakhitie Hele,* If a Bird, 1994; *Shymala Saransa,* Black Summing-up, 1998 etc.), Sm. Ranjita Nayak (b.1955; *Asanta Aparahna,* Restless Afternoon, 1989; *Drusya Drusyantara,* Scenes and Beyond, 1992; *Jhadara Akasha,* The Sky of Storms, 1996 etc.), Satrughna Pandab (b.1955; *Padma Palinki,* The Lotus Palanquin 1996; and *Sabarmati,* Sabarmati, 2000 etc.), Sanat Roy (b.1955; *Jatayura Dena,* The Wings of Jataya, 1986; *Arakula,* The Other Bank, 1997; *Avimantra,* 2005 etc.), Amaresh Khatua (b. 1957; *Samartha Biparjaya,* Competent Confusion; *Sabdaja Nirapatta,* The Security of Words; *Sammohita Swikruti,* Fascinated Confession; and *Sironama,* The Title etc.), Sm. Prabasini Mahakud (b. 1957; *Muhurtta Muhurtta,* Moment and Moment, 1990; *Adhara Sila,* The Container Stone, 1994 etc.), Sm. Jyotshna Das (b. 1958; *Tamehi Arambhakara,* You Begin, 1989; *Maya,* Illusion, 1996; *Janha Pari Nila,* Blue Like the Moon, 2001; *Tuma Saha Rasta Pari,* To Cross the Road With You, 2001 etc.), Akhya Behera (b.1959; *Jetesabu Gopaniya,* All That's Secret, 1994; *Matimantra,* The Earth's Mantra, 1998 etc.), Prasanna Kumar Mohanty (b.1959); *Pratyayara Paridhi,* The Circumference of Faith, 1993; *Priyasakha,* Dear Friend, 1997; *Chhai Saha Luchakali.* The Hide and Seek Game with the Shadow, 2000; and *Pade Pade Yudha,* Battle at Every Step, 2003 etc.), Gajanana Mishra (b.1960; *Sarbanama,* Pronoun, 1987; *Na Thiba Chitra,* Non-Existent Picture, 1991; *Station,* 1994, etc), Pritambar Tarai (b. 1960; *Sudrakar Sloka,* The Slokas of Sudraka, 2002; *Sairat : Sataka,* Hundred Sairatas, 2003 etc.), Surya Mishra (b.1960, *Satabarnara Sakala,* The Seven- Coloured Morning, 1990; *Eka Eka Shabasa,* Sleeping Together Alone All Alone 1996; and *Sunya Basa,* Empty Habitation, 2000 etc.), Sunil Kumar Prusti (b. 1963; *Deha Deula*

The Body as Temple, 1997 etc.), Sushant Kumar Sarangi (b.1964; *Sunyatar Susama,* The Grace of Emptiness, 1985; *Kurukhetrare Sakala,* The Morning at Kurukhetra, 1998; *Madhyahnare Suryasta,* The Sunset at Noon, 2000; *Ghara,* House, 2001; *Mathurara Madhyaratri,* Midnight at Mathura, 2002 etc.) and Sm. Sucheta Mishra (b. 1965; *Purbaraga,* Courtship, 1991, *Silalipi,* Stone-Script, 1995; *Uttarapakhya* After Generation, 1996; *Khub Pakhare,* Quite Near, 2001; and *Nija Nija Kurukhetra,* One's Own Battleground, 2005, etc.)

The initial gropings of this new poetry into experience and structure, steadily moving towards a graded maturity, is probably best seen in the poetry of Aparna Mohanty. She has five books so far, published between 1991 and 2002, a period of II years, and a total of 125 poems, and a long poem (*Atithi*), elaborating one theme, with 64 sequences, in the tradition of Ramakant Rath's *Sri Radha.* Aparna has one major theme, a strong desire for contact and communication, and in spite of heavy odds, familial and social, the joy in union, release and fulfilment. Related to this, a companion, but interesting direction is towards a social intent, particularly seen in the volume *Nisabdare,* which at times rises to the level of social satire against contemporary cheapness and vulgarity, and anger against the people who perpetuate that, and sympathy for social victims. At the same time an emphasis on woman's identity is eloquent - the strength to stand on one's legs and to find out one's own ramifications fearlessly. The attitudes of loneliness, loss as well as of contact and communion, along with a sense of defiance, are recurrent motifs in her poems.

Thus, as in *Asati,* the initial passage through lies and illusions- "Yet through lies/ Illusions and deceitfulness/ I move step by step/ Up to a top/ I don't know.", moves to a hope that there may be a point of freedom and release- "Searching for you/ My soul stirs/ In silent words/ Once the village roads become quiet/ Won't you come as before/ Soaked in autumn moon...", to a final

point of union and joy- "In my moment of complete emptiness/ You rise like the full moon./ You lighten me with what a strange smooth light/ Wipe out all the darkness of my heart/ Without my knowledge/ With what a strange unperceived touch,/ Before even I open my eyes/ My worried shocked soul/ Is already released/ Like the white lotus of divine fragrance.." In her latest, *Purnatama,* Aparna concentrates her attitudes in terms of love, particularly the twin directions, one motivated towards physical senses and the other goes beyond that. Thus as in the poem *Nija Ku Nijaku,* (One to Oneself).

At last...
You saw
You enjoyed my body.
At your touch
My eyes closed
Like touch-me-not plant,
Like blossoming lotus
My opening breasts....
Today...
I am an wilful woman
Strange to my own eyes,
Whose aim of existence is love
And the purpose of love,
Ambrosia ambrosia
Only,
The creativity of ambrosia.

Next to Aparna, Prasanna Kumar Mohanty's four volumes added a good deal of substantiality to the post-1980 Oirya poetry. His poems too, like Aparna's, had a simple structure, and dealt with emotion and sensitivity, with such factors as loss and agony on the one hand, and joy and happiness on the other, and throughout, a keen desire for contact, and gropings for fulfilment and tranquillity. This is evident from Prasanna's early volumes,

and a poem entitled *Pahadachadha* (Climbing a Mountain) from *Pratyayara Paridhi* is a good, early example. As one goes to the mountain-top the view below changes - "Little houses of distant villages/ On the other side of the jungle/ The lake like a picture/ And its water of sky-colour/ And groups of birds playing in the lake's water." But climbing a mountain has many inconveniences, that can be physical as well as otherwise, related to man's mental obstructions - jealousy, suspicion, hate, pride, envy, ego, animosity etc. Thus to climb to the top of the mountain one has to go beyond both bars, physical and mental, and then only the view becomes more than a nature's routine view - a keen sense of happiness, companionship and tranquillity, almost of a spiritual frame :

> Once at the top, the world looks most beautiful
> Once there, the sky's blessings pour on your head,
> Full of oxygen, unpolluted pure air
> That blows throughout days and nights, summer and spring,
> And the sweet dance of stream water takes away thirst...
> An incomprehensible divine touch
> Secures the area every moment.

Elsewhere, in the same volume, the poet gropes for contact and communication which he thinks could sustain him, but which remain elusive and unfixed - "I long for you/ Day and night, every moment/ Quietly, silently/ In my heart under my soul / Deeper inside/ I will meet you one day/ Sure..." (P.62). In the next volume *Priyasakha* the poet elaborates on the theme of contact and the desire to be linked though the end is unsuccessful. This he further elaborates in *Chhai Saha Luchakali* as well as in *Pade Pade Yudha* where individual's eagerness and desire are seen as not fulfilled, and the sense of loss and futility get linked with social distress and inequality. The poem *Yudha* (The Battle) in the last volume maps out the poet's struggles in life graphically - "I know/ This battle is mine with myself/ This is the battle-ground/ Only of my indistinct destiny..."

Sucheta Mishra, who emerged in early nineties, and came to a definite identity in her second book *Silalipi* also had a deceptively simple poetic structure, almost, like a continuity of conversation. *Silalipi* was a fine book, and generally outlined Sucheta's poetic attitudes, that showed a close link between a strong social awareness with an equally strong individual motivation towards a sense of loss and futility. In fact, the latter dominates and controls the former, and there is not much hope that the individual self can ever go beyond the circle of pain and suffering. Yet the strength lies in facing squarely the lashes of pain and agony, and accepting that as a part of life.

A good example is the poem *Basudha*, which is a character, an image, and also a symbol. The perception has an element of dream as one aspect - "I have dreamt all day long/ The dream of that rain-washed river/ Its distant banks/ The dream of grass fields...". On the other hand, a sense of loneliness - "Whereas a burning sun and its lonely rays/ Have emptied me all day long..." and at the end, restlessness and the feel of a corroding atmosphere- "The stench of articles of war in the environment/... The intolerant stench that moves from one murder to another/ Alive the whole day/ Through my unrecognized pain." Or, differently, another good example is *Sakala Hoini* (Not yet Morning) - "Here home means a roof of five feet/ Here home means, dumb wooden walls/ Here home is without a name/ Plenty of compassion/ And unending loss." The pain of living has troubled the poet again and again. For example, a poem entitled *Utkrusta Dukha* (The Best Sorrow) from *Khuub Pakhare,* that charts the poet's reaction at the death of a 19 year old girl - "Don't ask how that 19 year old girl died/ Was it a murder or a suicide/ Two months ago or two years before/ When she married/ Where did she die/ Sonepur or Cuttack/ What was her name/ Anusuya or Suhasini/ Don't ask'", and the conclusion - "When I returned/ After offering myself/ In the pyre of the 19 year old girl/ A stench pursues me/ It is of burnt flesh/ Or

of inhuman brutality/ Or of lost faith/ Or the so-called love/ I don't know." Sucheta's agony has invariably a social base, particularly social discrimination and inequality. In this she is one with other contemporary poets of her generation, such as, Aparna or Prasanna. But probably her voice is more eloquent, more strident.

Hrusikesh Mallik shot into prominence from his first book *Dhana Saunta Jhia,* which got Orissa Sahitya Akademi Award immediately after its publication in 1988. The book's singular quality was its exposition and context in rural life. The references to rural life or nature was nothing new in Oriya literature or Oriya poetry. But such references in Hrusikesh's poems had a new structural angle, a new crust and vivacity, that made rural life a part of general futility, yet advanced a type of sustenance and support, in a way a type of involvement, that could counter the corroding values, Most of the titles of the poems in the volume including the book's title-poem had rural locations, and as a whole the poems provided a different, refreshing note.

A good example is the title-poem *Dhana Saunta Jhia,* the account of a poor, young girl who picks up left - out paddy sheaves in the fields in the harvesting season and thereby earns a living (a usual practice in the villages). The poem charts the daily account of the girl, how she wakes up in the morning, gets herself ready, goes to the field with a small basket, and returns with the coming of evening. This is one aspect, the working one, the context. The other aspect relates to the girls' presence, how she brings a new meaning and relevance to the environment, and provides an identity that transcends mere physicalities to move towards a perception of delight and beauty. In the beginning the girl's daily chores- "The paddy-picking girl gets up before it is dawn/ She dips her young hand in cowdung water/ Smears all the doors/ Draws the impression of Laxmi's feet with white coloured water.." Then she eats water-shoaked-rice, and moves to the field as the day advances. In the fields she does her day's job - 'She picks up paddy/ She bends and

straightens/ Straightens and bends again...". But then what happens there is interesting. People in the fields get excited, affected, the harvesters and the people who supervise harvesting. But more important is what happens to the environment :

> The greedy bird of the morning
> Waits, and picks up her soft, liquid voice,
> *Aparajita* flower smears her colour round itself,
> And the girl like a mango-flower, like a black-marigold
> Herself becomes an invisible fragrance.

And once he touches, the carol of birds in unharvested fields become like musical drums, and like the impression of a cut on her back - "from the still clouds of the sky *Parijata* flowers drop". The trends seen in Hrushikesh's first book have generally continued in his other books, though there have been diverse topics at times, and particularly in *Dharmapatni,* there is a sequence of 15 poems on Ahallya, and another 38 poems on the subtle links the poet has with his wife. But on the whole, Hrushikesh's poems have a strong rural motivation, and a perception of intense joy and suffering largely in rural context.

Girija Kumar Baliarsingh started writing early in life, even before he was 20, and he wrote frequently. But his first poetry-collection was published in 1982, when he was 29, and subsequently all his collections were published only after 2000. Girija;s poems have two distinct phases. The first phase ended in 1998, and the poems written till then have been published in *Sarga Samagra* (Chapters Together, published 2004) that contained three volumes *Kraunch Mithuna, Dairira Sairi* and an unpublished one that far, *Trushna Tarpana* (Offerings of Thirst). After 1998, Girija's poetry took up different dimensions and larger range. The poems of the first phase were largely motivated by love, love's joys, happiness, distress, a distinct contribution as related to love to modern Oriya poetry. Thus excitement and happiness - "You are the golden moonshine of my love/ I am your blue moon,/ You are

like the touch of rain of my love/ I am your sounding clouds..." *(Sarga Samagra,* P.194), or differently, distress - "Here twilight means nothing except handful of dust/ Here the love's leaves fall off in the forest of golden deer/ The day's signature fades on the betel leaves/ And the map of your face becomes hazy, indistinct..." (p, 283). The volume *Bharatvarsha* provided a new dimension to the poetic-perception, by the poet's admission a 'poetic geography', based on a variety of perceptive images, that go to make not a physical entity but a mental entity. The poet addresses Bharatvarsha in many forms and tries to formulate the essence that sustained her, and still trying to sustain it in many ways.

Similarly *Chaturdasira Chandra*, Girija's latest collection of 120 sonnets, particularly from the view of the sequence of sonnets, is a singular contribution to modern Oriya poetry, and a fine one. The themes vary, from self analysis to an intricate link with the reality around, with a tone both detached and involved, and with an attitude emotionally involved yet tinged with pain and sorrow. Thus at the first instance, the poems have various references, such as to season (*Sitabasant*, Winter and Spring, P.32), to Konark (*Konark* P.67), to rivers (*Nadi : Nadi*, Rivers : Rivers, P.110), or to sense of sorrow (*Dinakala*, The Times, P.33) and sense of loss (*Pakhi Prati* , To the Bird, p.125) etc. But almost always the references are rounded up in structures suggesting unfulfilment and unhappiness. Hence, as in, *Konark*, the poem begins with references to an uncertain state of existence- "Have you ever seen how the time cries ?/ How the river faults while dancing in waves ?" and comes over to Konark - "Words have stilled here/ Pressed under the stone wheels.../ And days full of accidents.../ And dust gathers on the copulating figures/ Layers after layers...", and finally to hesitant assertion - "Chandrabhaga, look on, / Don't cry my mournful Konark, / There was love/ There is/ It will be there till sun and moon shine." Differently, about the rivers of Orissa - "The Mahanadi is my cloud/ The pain of Balanga

my ice/ The Kuakhai my dews/ and the river Kathajodi my mist." It continues through Rusikullya, Indrabati, Sabari, Bhargabi, Ib, Brahmani, Daya, Chitrotpala, Salandi and Subarnarekha etc. Finally, it is a suppressed sorrow :

Oh, my blue evenings of the rivers
That have never returned,
Oh, whose murmuring I am ?
Whose crying voice ?

The newer genaration of poets have not only added newer dimensions to moden Oriya poetry but have also added new vitality and new strength.

New Flowering : Short Story

(*i*)

Next to poetry, the literary genre that emerged in richness and force in the post-Independence years in Orissa, was short story. Like poetry it grew from many sources and spread to many channels. But more than poetry, and more eloquently, it got linked with the fast changing socio-political and cultural climate, and particularly with the shift from the village to the town, and from a primarily agricultural environment to an urban and industrial one. This had singular effect on human psychology and human attitudes, and the individual awareness and identity went through radical transformation. Whereas in poetry it was mainly a matter of individual perception and understanding, the expression of a probing mindset, in short story it took more concrete structure related to society and changing environment. We have already discussed the achievements to this effect of Gopinath Mohanty and Surendra Mohanty, two stalwarts. In addition, two other remarkable writers, whose range of short stories dominated the decades after Independence, were Kishori Charan Das (1924-2004) and Mahapatra Nilamoni Sahu (b.1926).

Kishori Charan Das belonged to Cuttack district, and in his Service career served as a member of the Indian Audit and Accounts Services and stayed mostly outside Orissa, with long spells abroad. He started writing from early forties, but wrote more seriously from the fifties, and his first story-collection, entitled *Bhanga Khelana* (Broken Toys) was published in 1961. Subsequently Das wrote consistently and continuously and his story-collections appeared at regular intervals. Begining from 1961 till 2002, he had a total of 19 story-collections, and more than 200 stories - this apart from 5 novels, an autobiography, and other types of writing. After *Bhanga Khelana* Kishori Charan's some other collections are, *Lakhya Bihanga* (Million Birds, 1968), *Ghara Bahuda* (Homecoming, 1968), *Manihara* (The Dispossessed, 1970), *Thakura Ghara* (The Prayer Room, 1975), *Nali Gulu Gulu Sadhab Bohu* (The Little Red Bride, 1978), *Bhinna Paunsa* (Other Ashes, 1984), *Trayobinsa Mrutu* (Twenty-third Death, 1987), *Leutani* (Return, 1989), *Nija Sandhya* (Own Evening, 1992), *Dhabala Akasa* (The White Sky, 1994), *Taranga* (Waves, 1997) and *Santa Aparanha* (The Quiet Afternoon, 2002) etc. Laterly, his first 16 story-collections have been collected together in 4 volumes, entitled *Tirish Barsar Galpa O Alap* (Thirty Years of Stories and Dialogues) that has the writer's afterthoughts about each of the stories after about 30 years - an extremely interesting feature of personal dialogues and personal assessments related to his own stories.

Thematically the stories of Kishori Charan are generally concerned with middle-class life and its manifold problems, complicated psyche of middle class character beyond any 'class' perception, and involvement in the socio-psychological habits of educated and sophisticated families. In a way, what they provide is a deep and sympathetic understanding of human life through psychological complications in apparently common, banal situations, and a portrayal of life both from within and outside,

where the protagonist is not separable from his emotions and attitudes, and where he is often eager for contact and identification. At the same time the companion attitude remains, that is, the individual's sense of alienation and distress, of alienation and boredom, and a strong sense of futility that innocence and creativity can no longer sustain man in today's cruel and unfriendly surrounding. In short, the stories have a complex structure, and what distinguishes them, first of all, is a quality of contemplation of modern man's predicament in an increasingly hostile urban culture, secondly, his penchant for wit and irony, particularly irony which he conveys at times with devastating effect, thirdly, the strains of cosmopolitanism which was almost rare in Oriya story before and which he combined with an easy aplomb with Oriya life and consciousness, and lastly an unexcited, unhurried tone which gradually becomes biting and ironical with a new sense of ageing and death.

References may be made to some good stories such as title-stories of *Lakhya Bihanga, Thakura Ghara, Nali Gulu Gulu Sadhab Bohu, Trayabimsa Mrutu, Leutani, Dhabal Akasha, and Santa Aparanha* etc. as well as a few other stories, such as *Bhangamuna* (Broken Nib, 1978) and *Jaleni* (The Fuel, 1982) etc. *Lakhya Bihanga* is about the boredom of a town-bred rich woman, -"...She finished turning the pages of the magazines. All her thought ended. Mrs. Puri switched on the transistor radio. Now is the time for European classical songs. She does not understand anything of classical music, yet she likes it... Mozart was finished. Mrs. Puri looked unmindfully at a distance, saw a lonely fly sitting on the refrigerator. She slowly closed her eyes." *Thakura Ghara* is about the reactions of the members of an upper middle class family at a time when the head of the family, mother, is on the verge of passing away - the reactions ranging from despair and sorrow to casualness and impatience at the development of the situation, where the Prayer Room where the family-deities are

housed becomes the catalytic agent. Similarly *Troyabimsa Mrutu* which is about the great Mahabharat queen Gandhari's 23rd marriage to a 'Sahada' tree, that also died like all the earlier youngmen to whom she was given in marriage, is seen as an archetype where Gandhari assumes elemental powers and her link through marriage with other people becomes like a movement of death through ages.

Similarly, a sense of cruel destruction, in a complex, cruel existence, where both innocence and creativity suffer, can be seen in *Naligulugulu Sadhab Bohu* which is about the devastating encounter of a foreign-returned young woman, full of joy and innocence, with the crude, limited native culture, that examines her body, beauty and manners as a prelude to marriage, and makes her in consequence reckless, when joy and innocence gone, what is projected is her naked, shameless hunger towards male entity to destroy and be destroyed - "As if she has freed a ferocious, reckless tiger, go, jump on them, run in the streets, go, go." Or in *Bhangamuna* which shows how the benefits of power and position adversely affect the creative sap, and joy, innocence, creativity all suffer, and at the end, in the midnight, when the protagonist desperately copulates with his wife to convince himself that he can still be creative, he suddenly hears the call of death, as pall-bearers carry a dead-body to the burial ground. The story *Jaleni* shows the protagonist's restlessness, dissatisfaction and emptiness more succinctly. The tension is built by the protagonist's link with her husband and father-in-law on the one hand, and with the sentiments for the moon on the other. Her whole family and her involvement etc., comes to her in retrospective impression. But nothing is resolved, and the end is a disturbing agony- "Chitra Devi had a feeling of emptiness after she put her father-in-law in bed. She thought the walk should not have finished so early. it would have been better if she would have walked further holding him and listening to his prattle. Yes, there should have been further

burning, more crackling, fluttering, to be burnt piece by piece, that is my life's last word."

Kishori Charan's *Dialogues* ('Alap'), where he viewed his own stories from a distance in time, almost like a detached (and not too-detached) observer, provide an unusual new dimension that crosses over the passage of time, and brings into greater focus his main themes of social analysis and individual alienation and distress. As he himself points out *(Tiris Barsara Galpa O Alap,* Vol. I, 1988, 'Pahili Alap', First Dialogue) :

> I am ashamed to admit that I have forgotten the subject-matter of many stories, in many others, I cannot believe that I could be so simple (sweet and simple, many may say), and as I went through many others I felt angry with myself that how and with what an amount of cleverness I tried to cheat my readers. Yet many of my old stories have once again made me aware of my continuing sense of humour and my belief in life that it is a great pleasure and happiness.

Mahapatra Nilamoni Sahoo was born in the coastal area of Cuttack district. He served in the Govt. colleges of Orissa. He started writing early in life, and has 18 story collections so far, some relatively more important ones being, *Sumitrara Hasa* (Sumitra's Laughter, 1961), *Ranu Apa Tharu Pusi Paryanta* (From Ranu Sister to the Kitten, 1965), *Andha Ratrira Surya* (The Sun of the Blind Night, 1971), *Anya Rupa Rupantara* (Metamorphosis, 1971), *Pingala Se Anyajane* (Pingala the Other Woman, 1977), *Avisapta Gandharva* (The Cursed Gandharva, 1981), *Papa O Mukti* (Sin and Redemption, 1983) and *Nibeditara Naisa Avisar* (The Night Rendezvous of Nivedita, 1984), etc.

Mahapatra Nilamoni's stories like Kishori Charan's were concerned with middle class life and its manifold problems, as well as with the sense of alienation and boredom of the urban middle class intellectual. Also like Das, he tried to achieve

structural organisation through wit, irony and humour. But there are differences too. For example, in contrast to Das's style, Nilamoni's is colloquial, rambling and had distinct autobiographical nuances. Besides, his framework of rural lores, legends and beliefs as well as concern with remote unfamiliar experiences provide a singular dimension to his stories. His stories have a large range of experience, and their emotional intensity often become philosophical. His early stories had a flair for comic and humorous. But laterly, the structure took up a contemplative layer, and what was obtained was a serious analysis of contemporary existence. A brief survey of the stories would be apt.

Sumitrara Hasa is an early story (1961). It refers to the social issue of a working-girl's psychological state of mind. The girl is unmarried, and her spurt of love has ended futilely. The story line is simple, and yet the continuing pain and loneliness which the young woman goes through, is basically the product of social incompatibility, and Sumitra's laughter, unusual for her character, is both a challenge and an expression of agony. Similarly, a story written a little later (1965), *Ranu Apa Tharu Pusi Paryanta* is a story of three sisters who in spite of their strenuous attempts to establish themselves through love and affection, failed miserably and finally stuck to each other with an overpowering sense of loneliness and disarray. The cat gives to them what the world has denied, and it becomes the symbol of their loneliness and insignificant living. The story *Andha Ratira Surya* (1971) has a different dimension. The social structure is still there but the motivation is towards an assessment of character and action, a deeper understanding of man's sentient aspect and existential complications. In an apparently simple story-line about the unfulfilled desires of a poor clerk, the references to a train accident and the reality of a storm superimpose. Both have devastating effects, but what is obtained is a complex perception - a complete devastation on the one hand with its concomitant man's base

instincts, and a free, released, grateful instinct on the other - "Other children came and surrounded the father. That small dark room got noisy with the prattle of the family, Mrutunjoy Babu in great happiness embraced that innocent, sinless, blissful, compassionate family, and shivered in joy..."

That was a new development in Nilamoni's stories around the seventies, when the creative perception could liaison between different levels of understanding, beginning from physical to beyond. All the stories of the volume *Anya Rupa Rupantara* showed this. It has 12 stories, including one of the longest stories of Nilamoni (60 pages), *Kapot Pakhi Guru Mora* (Dove, my Guru). The protagonist is just a common man who suffers from all common elements such as hunger, thirst, disease etc. But his experiences graduate beyond all that to a high level of mental contentment - "A flood of tears came out continuously from his eyes, his body shivered, his voice choked, he could not see anything, could not hear anything, and in an emotional harmony of tone, voice, measure and analogue his consciousness slowly rose to a point of supreme bliss... and in him there remained no trace of the world's form, sense, smell, sound or touch."

Avisapta Gandharba is Nilamoni's best collection, and one of the finest in the whole range of Oriya short stories after Independence, and it provides the writer's major trends most explicitly. It has 9 long stories, fine examples of Nilamoni's colloquial, rambling style, and has strong autobiographical elements, where the writer tells the stories in the first person. He is both the subject and the narrator, he suffers, and at the same time he comments and judges, and away from it all, there is the creative self of the author which remains unstained and untouched throughout, with a paradoxically ambivalent attitude of sympathy and irony, Hence what is ultimately communicated is not the event or the experience, but the essence of both. In fact it is difficult to extricate the event from the experience in the stories. They not only remain mutually linked, but also almost continuously expose

and assess each other mutually. Another equally strong feature is the concept of time, or the assessment through time, where the action 45 or 50 years ago of a child is linked with the reaction of the adult 50 years after - what is suffered is simultaneously analysed and assessed and an insight is provided into a different aspect of the same experience. The title-story, the longest story in the collection (about 46 pages) is a good example of Nilamoni's powers. It is about a simple, honest farmer who had distinguished himself in music and drama, and who, as the narrator confessed, opened up springs of perception for him. But as situations came along because of the clumsy (though sincere) attempts of the narrator to help Abhiram (the farmer) the latter was publicly insulted, his yatra-party ended, and he left the village for ever. It was a great agony for the young narrator which he never forgot, and long afterwards, after about 50 years, when the narrator had been established in life and society, he met Abhiram once again, a decrepit old man, but as strongly sensitive as ever. The adult narrator could sense his old agony coming back. But it was no longer the same agony, it had undergone a strange change, and a strange feeling of a deep happiness and contentment had filled his heart, almost like encountering one's own innermost deity - "I was silently chanting, 'Bow to you, Abhiram Parida'. A few drops of tear from my right eye crossed the cheek and fell on the ground, and another drop of tear came out of my left eye and hung below the eyelids." Nilamoni's stories entertain, excite, and provide a deep satisfaction. Both Kishori Charan and Nilamoni, along with Gopinath Mohanty and Surendra Mohanty, put Oriya story on a very strong foundation after Independence which subsequently grew to great dimension and richness.

(ii)

Other writers who made their debut after Independence, particularly in the early decades, and provided a fine viability as a whole to Oriya short story, to list relatively more important writers,

were, at the first instance, Basant Kumar Satpathy (1914-1994), Pranabandhu Kar (1914-1998), Rajkishor Roy (1914-1998), Bamacharan Mitra (1915-1976), Phaturananda (1915-1995) and Rajkishor Pattanaik (1917-1997); and little laterly, Akhilmohan Pattanaik (1927-1982), Chandrasekhar Rath (b.1929), Satkadi Hota (b.1929), Achyutananda Pati (b.1931), Krushna Prasad Mishra (1933-1994), Santanu Kumar Acharya (b.1933), Manoj Das (b.1934), and Chaudhury Hemakant Mishra (1935-2005).

Basant Kumar Satpathy belonged to Bangriposhi, Mayurbhanj district, and taught English in the Government colleges of Orissa. He had 10 story-collections, some of which being, *Anti Romantik* (Anti Romantic, 1970), *Mansasi Mananka Udhyasare* (For the Meat-Eaters, 1980), *Gote Alu* (A Piece of Patato, 1982), *Ganga O Gangi* (Ganga and Gangi, 1981), and *Nidasrayi* (In the Nest, 1983) etc. The stories are socio-satirical, that is, to expose the society in all its predicaments with a satirical point of view. The satire is inclusive, that is, it is as much against the society as against the writer himself. Often there is tension between the individual and the social predicament, which provides a strong structural flexibility to the stories. Additionally, Satpathy mixes laughter with serious contemplation, probes into psychological depths of his characters, and often makes out a belles-lettrestic form, and like Phakirmohan Senapati joins humour and irony for his effects. "I want to let know the world as I have known it," he said once, "to preach social reforms, or social morals has never been my aim." The title-story of *Nidasrayi* can be taken as a representative story of Satpathy. The story is in dialogue- form, a dialogue between the wife and the husband in the morning, about giving medicine to feverish children at night, and the wife's narration how it happened through her fitful sleep, fear, and anxiety, when she got companionship from a mother-sparrow and its two younglings that had formed a nest inside the room. First, the fear in the lonely, dark room beside the ailing children - "You can't

imagine what was the condition of my mind, how I suffered from an unknown fear. If there would have been just a sound, from an owl, or a jackal, or even a bat, you would have been arranging my bier now...". Then the companionship between the mother and the mother-sparrow, a subtle, invisible oneness that brought hope, confidence and courage - "Really my strength increased. We two mothers and four children kept awake, in the same temple, with the same purpose. I did not have any doubt about the illness of her children. Otherwise why did she keep awake, why should she be so sensitive to sound ? Slowly I felt that bird at the ceiling was like my own sister, born from the same mother..." The story is in conversational, colloquial language, has a good sense of humour, particularly in the tension between the wife's seriousness and the husband's casualness, but what dominates the perception is a strong sense of compassion, an awareness that there is always a subtle link between one animate being and another, and livingness in whatever form or object is to be recognized and honoured.

Pranabandhu Kar was born at ex-State Dampada, district Cuttack, and served in the Government colleges of Orissa. He had started writing very early, before Independence and continued to do so throughout his career. He did not have any story- collections published during his life-time except getting stories published in journals. All his stories, published between 1934 and 1997, total 45, were collected together and published after his death, posthumously in 1998, under the title *Galpa* (Stories). The distinct quality of Kar's stories lay in a broad, humanistic perspective. He was concerned with the activities of the social-man, and tried to 'photograph' as much of details as he could accommodate in his frame. But it was not the stark reality that he was always concerned with. By his own admission, he was motivated by compassion, with a continuous desire to understand 'other' point of view, to accommodate the truth no doubt, but to temper it with imagination, the purpose being to provide a harmonious whole as the effective

creative unit. As a result, Kar's stories had invariably a dimension of psychological probing and a subtle play of humour, not leading to laughter, but to contemplation, where humour provides a companion level of understanding. At the same time he highlighted the pangs and joys of family-life, pointed to post-Independence corruption without frills, and projected individual identity and self-respect. A good example is the story *Hero*, the story of a tribal youngman's resistance to injustice and uncivilized manners, at the end of which he preferred to accept adversity than to compromise with self-respect - "I tell you Babu, the day my girl is with me, nobody says anything, I get more money.... he laughed. Then he spoke irritably-I got beaten for keeping the prestige of my mothers and sisters, I begged, and yet these people could look greedily at my young bride. Didn't I tell you, I'm all right. I break stones, dig earth, I can tolerate that. To beg is like eating stool". Similarly, another story, *Nisithara Pretatma* (The Ghost of the Night) shows how educated, well-placed people can freely cheat the poor and the diseased for furthering their own political or personal gains. Kar has spoken of the themes and techniques of his stories and maintained that not so much techniques but the force of the themes has always motivated him. Kar's stories spanned Independence and remain today as a fine body of contemporary awareness.

Rajkishor Roy who served in the Govt. colleges in Orissa was born at Mendhasal, near Bhubaneswar. Though like Pranabandhu Kar he had started writing early in life, his stories came to distinction in the forties and mostly in the fifties. He wrote profusely, and had about 16 story-collections, such as, *Nila Lahari* (Blue Waves, 1945) *Manara Mrunal* (The Lotus Stem of the Mind, 1947), *Jaysree* (The Victory, 1947), *Banajyotsna* (The Moon of the Forest, 1948), *Asok Chakra* (Asok Wheel, 1949), *Bikacha Satadala* (Blossoming Lotus, 1949), *Marupathe* (In the Desert Path 1962), *Panka Chandan* (Mud and Sandal-Paste, 1963), *Jiban Sangita* (The Song of Life, 1965) and *Manwantarara Manab* (Man

of the Distressed Times, 1988) etc. Roy's stories dealt with social issues and social situations in connection with human behaviours, but usually with compassion and sympathy and often with great emotion. In fact intensity of emotion is a hallmark of his stories and a romantic motivation is an important ingredient. Yet the stories had a strong approach towards reality and truth, to contemporary disorder and corruption, and particularly with disturbing social factors that emerged after Independence. Roy had a keen interest for an elite style of writing and linguistic decoration, and himself being a practising actor, loved a dramatic exposition of facts, both through situation and commentary. A good example is the title-story of *Panka Chandan.* The story is about the devastation caused by floods, and the references are not so much to details related to specific place or person but to a general situation and condition. Yet life's pattern continues, after the calamity of floods the welcome-festival of Goddess Durga comes along, and destitution and suffering are replaced by joy and hope- "True Madhab Jena is no more but his two hands have become thousand hands. True Labani is gone, but destitute Oriyas are prostrating themselves everywhere before the Mother-Goddess, hearts full of woes, eyes full of tears, praying 'O Mother bless us... Let the great life coming from great calamity change mud to sandal-paste."

Bamacharan Mitra who served as an officer in Orissa Administrative Service, was born in Baruan, Purusottampur, in Jajpur district, in an ancient family whose members had come to Orissa along with Sri Chaitanya, about 500 years ago. Mitra wrote his stories mostly after Independence, and his story-collections were, *Swapnasidha* (Fixed by Dreams, 1960), *Asima* (Infinity, 1961), *Pasanara Prana* (The Life of Stone, 1961), *Bata Mahapurusa* (The Banyan-Tree Saint) and *Mahapurusa Bag* (The Saint's Garden, 1963). At a later stage, after Mitra's death, all these stories were published in three posthumous volumes, arranged earlier by Mitra himself before his death. They were, *Mitragalpa*

(Mitra's Stories, 1979), *Mitrakalpa* (Mitra's Imagination 1979) and *Mitraswolpa* (Mitra, A Few, 1980). With simple, forthright language and themes taken from the inherent incongruities of caste, family, society etc., the stories made a distinct mark in the fifties and sixties. They were often of socio-personal nature with subtle, ironical attitudes and pleasant humour, quite at times with references to patterns of life and living conditions then available in the Cuttack city, where he spent most of his early years. A strong social consciousness, and an equally strong intellectual curiosity provided two dimensions to his stories and coupled with a sensitive humanistic attitude and a keen sense of spiritualism the stories developed a perspective that was much appreciated and recognized by discerning readers at the time. Some of the good stories may be mentioned, such as, the title-stories of *Swapnasidha, Bata Mahapurusa, Mahapurusa Bag, Pasanara Prana* etc. as well as *Laddu, Holi, Dharmakhetra,* three stories about Mimi, two stories about Baba Daharananda, and *Nirbachan* (Election). *Gotie Madhyabita Paribarare Musa* (A Rat in a Middle Class Family) etc. For example, two excellent stories, *Swapnasidha* and *Nirbachana,* deal with two different subject matters. The former is based on a family happening - how the father is anxious to get a little quiet time for his own work, how the children, a brother and a sister, often quarrel with each other and yet have strong invisible bonds of attachment, and how the wife interferes, and pacifies all of them. The second one is more interesting. It has a socio-political-cum-administrative content, the occasion being the Second General Election of India. First, the preparation for election - the anxiety and excitement related to sending polling parties to polling booths, second, a microscopic exposition of the voter's attitude, and lastly, a scene in the polling booth itself, both of routine official work and an unfamiliar, personal involvement of the voter :

> The polling began next day morning. The first person to vote was old Danei Pradhan. A dirty napkin is wrapped

round his loins. Since a part of the napkin is torn, a part of the buttock is visible. A sickle tugged in his arm-pit, he came to vote. It is not known for whom he voted. Then the flow of voters started.

A number of women had gathered outside. The polling officer ordered to let the women come in...

First came Dula Dei. Age twenty-three. A compact body. On distinct round buttock a silver waistchain has increased the show. A large vermillion paint on the forehead. Keeping one hand on the shoulder of her friend she stood curvingly before the first officer. 'What's the name ?' The officer asked. No reply, only a smile. 'Name ?' No reply. 'Why don't you say the name ?' the officer showed irritation. Slowly a sound came from below the veil - 'Duli Dei', 'Duli Dei ?'. No answer, only the head nodded. 'Husband is Raghua Bhoi ?' - the officer looked at the list. Duli Dei shyly whispered in her friends ears. 'How come, they know his name.' It is not known for whom Duli Dei voted.

Mitra wrote a total of 67 stories. Their language, organisation and the thematic range provided a solid substantiality to Oriya short story in the fifties and sixties.

Phaturananda (Ramchandra Mishra), by qualification a physician, belonged to Cuttack, but did not take up any professional service or practice due to his own ailment. He had started writing early before Independence, but it was only after Independence, particularly beginning from the fifties, that his creative talent came to a richness and he came to be recognized as the most important writer to incorporate humour in his stories. He had about 20 story-collections, some of which are, *Sahitya Chasa* (Cultivating Literature, 1959), *Mangalbaria Sahitya Sansad* (The Tuesday Literary Association, 1963), *Haskura* (The Laughing Man, 1972), *Bidusaka* (The Joker, 1972), *Bhot* (Vote, 1980), *Gamat* (Getting

Together, 1982), *Nabajia* (The Humorous Man, 1983), *Maskara* (Cutting Jokes, 1985), *Heresa* (Eternally Laughing, 1988), and *Tapuria* (The Man of Humour, 1988) etc. Phaturananda's style was basically humorous-cum-satirical and he had a penchant to lighten however serious the situation might have been. His location was mostly Cuttack's habitation or 'Basti' areas (He composed a long narrative work in poetry on Cuttack 'Basti', entitled *Sahi Mahabharat,* a unique work that mixed humour with satire). In fact Phaturananda's characters were mostly drawn from Cuttack's people, whose many lacunas of social living, from habits, manners to opinions, were mercilessly exposed. Thus in a story such as *Gandhi Bansa Dhwansa* (The Destruction of Gandhi's Dynasty) we are told how prohibition that had been one of the main issues during Gandhi's movement, lost all its seriousness after Independence when drinking was actively and openly promoted by the new rulers; and in *Jautuka Fine* (Dowry Fine) we are told how in spite of rigorous rules against dowry, people could always find holes in the rules to circumvent them and continue the evil system. Phaturananda's humour was directly linked with social satire, and deep down it always carried a strong castigation against the evil doings in the society by unscrupulous people.

Rajkishor Pattanaik, professionally an advocate, belonged to an ancient aristocratic family of southern Orissa, that had settled in Cuttack. He was both a novelist and a story-teller, and wrote profusely. His story-collections numbered 12, some of which were, *Tutha Pathara* (The Stone on the Bathing Ghat, 1948), *Nisan Khunta* (The Sign-Post, 1951), *Pathuki* (The Traveller, 1952), *Salagram* (The Divine Stone, 1958), *Bhada Ghara* (The Rented House, 1958), *Kalpanara Phula* (The Flowers of Imagination, 1959), *Hata Bahuda* (To Return from the Market, 1974) and *Adua Suta* (Confusing Thread, 1983) etc. Pattanaik's stories have mostly simple design and simple language and often the emphasis is on suggestiveness than on details and clarity. He probed into human

characters with sympathy and humanistic approach and was equally at ease with whatever topic he chose as his subject matter. For example, he at times took up extra-human characters, such as animals and birds, and explored their links with human beings. Such stories were, *Pratidan* (Compensation), *Sultan, Muka* (Dumb), *Biswas* (Faith) and *Pasu* (Animal) related to dogs, *Kalpanara Phula* related to a bull, *Nida* (Nest) related to a sparrow, *Kutila Manar Paridhi* (The Circumference of a Crooked Mind) related to an old ox, and *Jibanara Maya* (Love for Life) related to a dog, a cat and a monkey. In *Pratidan* a dog is fondled while it is young and active, and ignored when it grows old and cannot work, suggestive of similar treatment given to human beings; in *Muka* the condition of a dog which often gets abused dumbly is compared with the similar conditions of lower grade employees in the offices; and differently, in *Pasu* the attachment of a mother-dog towards its newly-borns has been equated with such attachment of a mother towards her children. This is one aspect of Pattanaik's stories, an unusual one. But otherwise like other story-tellers of his time, he too was concerned with the sorrow, agony, helplessness and deplorable condition of the common man whether in the society or in the offices or elsewhere. Thus *Pathara* (Stone) narrates the pitiable life of a poor clerk, *Ghasa* (Grass) equally pitiable life of a poor man, and in *Puruna Katha* (Old Tale) how the frauds, cheats and unscrupulous people flourished and became rich after Independence. Pattanaik's has been a quiet but strong voice and his stories provide a deep understanding of human habits and manners.

Akhilmohan Pattanaik, son of Bankanidhi Pattanaik, the legendary Headmaster and story-writer before Independence, was professionally an advocate. He had written stories prior to 1960, but was established as a fine story-teller after 1960. He had a total 58 stories published in 4 volumes. They are *Jhadar Igal O Dharanira Krushnasara* (The Eagle of the Storm and the Stag of

the Earth, 1964), *O Andhagali* (And Blind Lane, 1979), *Nadira Nama Ganatantra* (Democracy, the River's Name, 1984) and *Pratham O Sesha* (The First and the Last, 1990) the last two being posthumous publications. Differently, in a different form, 12 fictional letters, addressed to a fictional character Sujata, suggesting feelings of love and personal restlessness, were published together in 1957, under the title *Manastatwikar Chithi* (The Letters of a Psychologist), which was laterly changed to *Anagata Phalguna* (The Noncoming Spring) in 1982. Akhil's stories have psychological bearings. They deal with subconscious in an intellectual frame and provide a good deal of emotional intensity. As a whole, we may note three aspects in his stories, first, a bohemian, care-free attitude, secondly, a strong left commitment reflecting the writer's personal association with the left movement, and thirdly, a good deal of compassion for human predicament, and all through the stories what dominates as an integral structural element is an intense sense of loneliness and unfulfilment. Some of the stories, for example, may be listed, such as *Chandrara Avisap* (The Curse of the Moon), *Pakhyaghat* (Paralysis), *Sukant Mohanty*, *Rupnarayan Saha*, *Sidharthara Upakatha* (The Tale of Sidhartha), *Lamp Poster Itikatha* (The History of the Lamp Post) and the title-story of the book *Jhadare...* etc. Subsequently we may also note, *Dimiriphula* (The Pig-Flower), *Gotie Lateri Ticket* (A Lottery Ticket), *O Andhagali*, *Bahurupi* (Chameleon), *Suvarnamayee Upakhyana* (The Account of Suvarnamayee) and *Hansa Sangita* (The Swan's Song) etc. Akhilmohan died untimely and also did not write many stories. But whatever he wrote established him as a powerful story-teller, who strongly castigated social inequalities and at the same time viewed human frailties with compassion and sympathy.

Chandrasekhar Rath, who served in the Govt. colleges of Orissa, is from Bolangir district and is currently settled in Bhubaneswar. He came to prominence as a story-writer in the later

seventies, and wrote profusely in the eighties and nineties. He has so far about 15 story-collections, such as, *Aswarohira Galpa* (The Story of Cavalry, 1979), *Samrat O Anyamane* (The Emperor and Others, 1980), *Kritadasar Swapna* (The Dream of a Slave, 1981), *Sabutharu Dirgha Ratri* (The Longest Night, 1984), *Asruta Swara* (Unheard Voice, 1989), *Bagha-Sabara* (The Tiger as Rider, 1996), etc. Rath's stories have three distinct qualities, first, a strong humanistic appeal, secondly, an intellectual frame, and thirdly, a deep spiritual quest. The stories often provide an expose of the inner life of the modern man, largely related to a socio-psychological motivation. Stylistically Rath's stories have a distinction too. They have a flowing, flexible movement interspersed with poetic images and decorative nuances at par with his belles-lettrestic writings in which he has made a mark. A few stories may be noted. For example, the story *Aswarohi* does not communicate a story, but only a point of view, that is, the 'cavalry' is an image that shows the common man's strength as invincible, a fiery power that brings in revolution. Similarly, *Samrat* is a satirical reflection of modern life, where the 'Samrat' is not an emperor from history or mythology but a common actor who acts the role of an emperor in an Opera Party, and what the story provides is a stark, painful reality of his miserable living. Differently, the stories such as, *Swapna Bhanga* (Dream Broken), *Museum*, *Ghara Thikana* (The Home Address) etc. portray the helplessness of modern man; and stories such as, *Durdina* (Bad Time), *Pralaya* (The Deluge) and *Tash Ghara* (The House of Cards) highlight man's destitution and losing struggle for a living. In this connection, the story *Chera* (Roots) is a suggestive one where on the one hand, the roots of sin go deep across generations, and on the other, there is an intense desire to save mankind from all pains and agonies. Rath's stories are analytical and often provide a serious socio-psychological point of view.

Satkadi Hota, a senior Indian Railway Services officer, now

retired and settled in Bhubaneswar, originally comes from Mayurbhanj district. Though he had started writing from the fifties onwards, most of his story-collections, numbering about 20, were published from the seventies onwards. Some such collections are, *Phulara Gotie Suravi* (The Flower's Fragrance, 1977), *Begum Saheba* (1978), *Langala Raja* (The Naked King, 1981), *Nilachalaku Rasta* (The Road to Nilachala, 1982), *Jagannathanka Hasa* (The Laughter of Jagannath, 1982), *Mo Galpara Nayak* (The Hero of my Stories, 1984), *Saba Seshare* (At the End, 1991), *Ebam Muktira Swapna* (And the Dream of Freedom, 1996), *Dipa Jalile Alua* (Light Comes When Lamp is Lit, 1998) and *Sumbha Nisumbha* (2000)etc. That which can be noted in Hota's stories immediately, relate to his simple language, easy construction and social themes - particularly an insight into social situation, and realization to what extent a realist society or a society given to self-preferment, can affect the structure of human values. Hota himself admits that he uses stories as so many instruments of social reform. In fact, his stories excel in social analysis and provide the relative tension of a sensitive soul in countering the uncongenial social compulsions. For example, the story *Krushnachudara Samadhi* (The Burial of Gulmohar Tree) centres on a shelterless, destitute old woman under a Gulmohar tree and moves towards faith in life in spite of faithlessness and destitution. Similarly, the story *Anurag* (Affection) creates a graceful picture of motherland in spite of many lacunas, in the eyes of a foreign-returned youngman. Most of Hota's stories have two dimensions, one towards whatever goodness one can acquire, the other towards a lack of it, of loss and emptiness. The story *Alokita* (Lightened) from *Nilachalaku Rasta* is such a one. Its social basis is not that important as the individual's jointing with other individuals and the emerging feelings thereon. The story has been organized in the frame of feelings. It has two directions-one, an anxiety towards fulfilment, the other, a sense of emptiness. The protagonist

represents both, a desire towards fulfilment of life, the other, a sense of complete emptiness where all desires vanish in illusion. Hota's stories provide a good understanding of social factors, of that which sustain a society and the social man, and of that else which corrode it, but ultimately it is the former that dominates and provides strength to life.

Achyutananda Pati belongs to Jajpur district. He writes sparingly, and though he had started writing from early fifties, his story-collections came to be published from the seventies. He has 6 collections so far. They are *Asuva Putrara Kahani* (The Story of an Inauspicious Son, 1973), *Ugrasen Ubacha* (Thus Says Ugrasen, 1976), *Nian Jaluchhi* (The Fire Burns, 1978), *Snayu O Sannyasi* (The Nerves and the Ascetic, 1981), *Chari Sangata Katha* (The Story of Four Friends, 1983) and *Kahani Nuha* (Not a Story). Pati's stories provide a good perspective of human experience, a strong resentment about social inequalities, incongruities and the social as well as individual discrimination. A realist, given to portray the stark realities of life as much as possible, the attitude being socio-psychological, he nonetheless uses a range of images and symbols in a style which is both analytical and descriptive. Two aspects particularly can be noted. First, Pati's style of writing incorporates a good deal of rural language and lores, not usually seen in the writings of his contemporary authors. Secondly, his concern with extra-human creatures, animals and birds, whom he often refers in his stories- an habit that can be compared with that of Rajkishor Pattanaik's. For example, in his well-known story, *Asuva Putrara Kahani*, an owl is the symbol of a neglected man, that ends its life tragically through its curiosity to see life. Such other stories refer to dog, snake, monkey, cow, cat, and sparrow etc., where the attitude is often to show how the weak is tortured by the powerful. There are other types of stories too, such as, *Ajay Pattanaik* that shows the primitive habits of man, *Chhai* (Shadow) that protrays the mental suffering of an old man in the last stage of

his life as he remembers his past, *Snayu O Sannyasi* highlights contemporary political corruption and how best man can rise to a finer understanding of life, and in stories *Nari* (Woman), *Sarama* (Sarama), *Savyatara Swapna* (The Dreams of Civilization), and *Padma Pokhari* (Lotus Pond) etc. various aspects of a woman's mind. From this point of view, the title-story of *Ugrasena Ubacha,* a short one, not exactly a story, but a statement, is representative of the writer's attitude. It takes in a sweep various dignitaries in the social and social-administrative set up who are in the habit of misusing the privileges of their position, and shows a sharp resentment against them- "Whomsoever I spoke about were all of third generation. Today, like many others, for a tooth and nail fight against corruption, I light gunpowder in my fighting mouth."

Krushna Prasad Mishra's family, a well-known publishing firm in Orissa, came from Berhampur, and is currently settled in Cuttack. Krushna Prasad's education was both inside India and abroad, He joined Government colleges and subsequently Utkal University as Professor of Philosophy. He passed away untimely. His story collections were first published in the sixties, and then continued to be published at regular intervals. They include *Maunabati Ratri* (The Silent Night, 1961), *Kritadasar Kavya* (The Poetry of a Slave, 1963), *Naigra O Debajani* (Naigra and Debajani, 1968), *Bhrugu Samhita* (Bhrugu's Writings, 1973), *Nijaku Nayaka Kari* (Making Oneself the Hero, 1975), *Parijataka* (About Parijata, 1982), *Parbatarohana* (To Climb a Mountain, 1987), *Manikya Sandhana* (In Search of Diamond, 1989) and *Daffodil O Gangasiuli* (Daffodil and Gangasiuli, 1991) etc. Mishra's stories have an easy, effortless movement, a dramatic frame, and show deft handling of themes related to socio-psychological situations. At the same time they have a delightful cosmopolitanism, where often Eastern and Western cultures are compared, assessed and are provided with an identity. Then in a different way, the stories also show the modern man's helplessness, sexual desires, and processes of thought and

consciousness. The story *Mukha* (Mask) from *Bhrugu Samhita* is a good example that shows the encounter between the Orissan culture and a foreign culture. The story has been built up around the statue of Gopabandhu Das, a very ideal person, at Puri, near the sea-beach The statue as such is dumb and lifeless. But it also symbolizes certain aspects of idealism and the manner of living of the person concerned (who had legendary reputation for his compassion for human beings) which pass on to the foreigners when the proper moment comes and proper action takes place, such as saving somebody from drowning in the sea - "John that time was trying to lit a cigarette, but failed due to wind. The lame man tried to pull him. For a moment John could not decide what to do and looked at the sea. Then suddenly next moment, he started running towards the sea. That time, in a drowsy condition Merlin shouted - "Well done ! Well done John ! Bravo, you have now taken up the look and the figure of that statue ! Beautiful ! Beautiful " Differently in such stories as *Samuka* (Shell) and *Bhrugu Samhita*, man's inherent desires for companionship is suggested to be more relevant than such posers as science of a so called scientific habit of mind may provide. The later story particularly, shows an intense individual loneliness vis-a-vis one's own desires, the reference being to a lone lady's intolerance at others' conjugal companionship, that she happens to notice- "Sucharita was feeling uncomfortable. She again changed her side and got bitterly angry with the clouds. Strange, how such a strength came to her, She suddenly stood up and moved restlessly on the roof....". Mishra's stories have a floating range of consciousness that is rooted here and now, and at the same time moves beyond. They enlighten and tend us to think.

Santanu Kumar Acharya comes from Sidheswarpur, a well-known village in Cuttack district, and is currently settled in Bhubaneswar. He is trained in natural sciences and has taught in the Government colleges in Orissa. He is also a novelist of repute,

and his novels as well as story-collections got simultaneously published beginning from 1962, when his first story-collection entitled *Manamarmar* (The Whisperings of Mind) got published. His subsequent story-collections, totalling about 15, are *Durbara* (The Invincible, 1965), *Aranyar Chula* (The Tip of the Forest, 1974), *Adina Baula* (Untimely Mango Flower, 1978), *Karanjia Dairi* (Karanjia Diary, 1984), *Adya Sakala* (The First Morning, 1985), *Sarpa Jana* (The Snake-Vehicle, 1989), *Chalanti Thakura* (The Moving God, 1991), *Nataliar Omkara* (Natalia's Omkar, 1995) and *Drusya Adrusya* (Visible and Invisible, 2002) etc. Acharya's stories, in general, have social motivation and implicit humour, and in addition, almost in line with his novels, psychological attitudes and symbolic projections. In him the themes and style often go hand in hand, where each depends on the other, and they mutually enrich the total structure, which in many cases provide an experimental newness. As a whole, the stories have a wide canvas. Beginning with the realistic perception of the world and an awareness of contemporary issues and factors, the stories move to expose and assess socio-political immorality and corruption, and tangentially project references to the Vedas, Upanishads etc., in short, the past heritage. Related to all that, Acharya's habit to bring in remote, almost mysterious experiences (as in *Karanjia Dairi),* and his habit of taking recourse to fantasy, that is, concretizing human inclinations such as towards pity, innocence and criminality etc., (as in *Aranyara Chula* and *Durbara*) add fresh dimensions to the stories. A good example of Acharya's psychological attitudes and symbolic projections is the title-story of *Adya Sakal,* which pictures the awakening of a young boy into adolescence in the context of nature's naturalness and simplicity. Differently, the stories like *Hrudakolap* (The Heart a Lock) and *Paribara Brukhya* (The Family Tree) are fine probing stories where the writer goes into details of reality, particularly the former is a fine symbolic presentation of how the doubts,

uncertainties and loneliness etc., have hung a lock in the mind of every modern educated Indian where the key is lost. Acharya's stories cultivate intelligence and intellect and have made Oriya stories richer that way.

Manoj Das comes from Bhogarai, in Balasore district, and except early years in Cuttack, he is currently settled at Pondichery. Reputed as a teacher, a writer (writes both in Oriya and English) and an exponent of Sri Aurobindo philosophy, he travels all over the world, and writes stories, novels, travelogues, essays, belles-lettres etc. with equal competence. He was the first Oriya writer, and the youngest till that date, to get the Sahitya Akademi Award for short story, in 1972. He has about 14 short-story collections, which include, *Samudrara Khyudha* (The Hunger of the Sea, 1950), *Bisa Kanyara Kahani* (The Story of the Poision- Girl, 1955), *Sesha Basantara Chithi* (The Letter of the End-Spring, 1965), *Abu Purusa O Anyanya Kahani* (Abu Purusa and Other Stories, 1965), *Monoj Dasanka Katha O Kahani* (The Stories and Tales of Manoj Das, 1971), that contained 54 stories, Manoj's largest collection, *Laxmira Avisara* (The Tryst of Laxmi, 1974), *Dhumrav Diganta* (The Hazy Horizon, 1977), *Manoj Panchabinsati* (Twenty Five of Manoj, 1983) and *Abolakara Kahani* (The Tales of Disobedient Man, 1996) etc. Manoj had started writing from early fifties, and by the end of sixties had been established as a substantial story-writer. His stories had an intellectual frame, psychological attitudes and provided good insight into contemporary life. In addition, he had an implicit spiritual enquiry as an integral part of his stories, and often put emphasis on the country's past tradition, a good example being his continuous echoes from Bishnu Sharma and *Panchatantra,* Surendra Mohanty refers to this aspect when he points out that Manoj does not write stories but tells tales. In fact, almost all the components of Manoj's thematic structure such as , humanistic attitude, spirituality, mystic elements, and spirit of compassion, are suitably adjusted with his choice of language,

stylistic variations, and a relaxed, intimate tone - as if, somebody sitting close to us is narrating a tale with aplomb, that pleases him as well as the listners. Manoj's stories are many, and have a wide range. In a selective way they can be divided into decades. In the fifties the relatively more well-known stories are, *Samudrara Khyudha*, *Bisakanyara Kahani*, *Aranyak* (Beastly), *Jajabara Putrar Kahani* (The Story of the Vagrant Son), *Rai Bahaduranka Nisa* (Rai Bahadur's Mustache) etc. Similarly, the stories in the sixties include, *Antarang Danaba* (Intimate Giant), *Dura Nirjanar Swara*(The Voice of the Distant Loneliness), *Adrusta Muhurtta,* (The Unseen Moment), *Abasista Pruthibi* (The Rest of the World), *Sesha Basantara Chithi*, and *Apahruta Topira Rahasya* (The Mystery of the Stolen Cap) etc. The stories in the seventies are *Ota* (Camel), *Dhumrav Diganta*, *Bhutuni Eka Bidaya* (Lady-Ghost Bye Bye), *Laxmira Avisara* etc. Manoj is a major story-teller, a writer of great relevance, and the spread of his stories is like the spread of a multi-coloured highly captivating carpet.

Choudhury Hemakant Mishra comes from Bheda, Mahanga, in the Cuttack district. Trained in Psychology, and psycho-linguistics, he spent many years as a Professor in N.C.E.R.T., New Delhi, Hemakant concentrated on one area, that is, humour, and he is reckoned today as a major writer of humorous stories in Orissa at par with Phaturananda. But whereas Phaturananda's humour is a direct part of his stories, Hemakant's is indirectly linked, and often it tends to become much more analytical and introspective, and is related to socio-political incompatibility and incongruities, with a subtle view all the time how such lacunae can be remedied and reformed. He came to prominence in the seventies, and his story-collections include, *Nisiddha Pustaka* (Forbidden Books), *Kurulia Galpa* (Titillating Stories, 1976), *Bhallukar Pura Pant* (The Full-Pant of the Bear), *Aghatana* (Something Unusual), *Hemakantanka Hasagolla* (The Hasagollas of Hemakant, 1984) and *Haskura Kathamana* (The Laughable

Stories, 1985), etc. A good example from Hemakanta's stories is *Grismabakasara Jibanta Sabajatra* (The Procession of a Live Dead Body in a Summer Time). The location is a college hostel in Cuttack (Ravenshaw College ?) during summer time, and the occasion is the quarrel between two inmates of a hostel-room. The action has three phases. First, the account of the quarrel that moves to fisticuffs and the encouragement given by other inmates. Second, the silence and the truce because of the sudden appearance of the Warden. The third, sometime later, not a quarrel, but a one-sided 'attack' by the hostel-inmates on one of the two persons, under information by the other person, that the former had swallowed opium on a bid to commit suicide. Thus all the inmates got together to give the person concerned a continuous thrashing so as not to let him fall asleep because that would be fatal. Finally, the person is taken to the hospital where in spite of his protest that he had neither swallowed opium nor done any such thing, his stomach was washed. It is an occasion and a situation which by itself is slight, and a commonplace thing in any hostel, one may say, an expression of the group vivacity of young inmates. But the author organizes it, with deliberate verbiage to some extent, but largely with layers of experiences related to real-life conditions, as a result of which the entire situation takes a larger than life proportion, and what is just a minor occasion assumes a serious probing into human manners and habits, and a close insight into how people live. Hemankant's sally into humour closely allied to social analysis was a singularly distinct contribution to Oriya story.

(iii)

The short-story writers we have discussed so far came to prominence and dominated the scene till the end of the senventies though they continued to write with equal amount of vivacity and force even after that. But after about later seventies, more particularly from early eighties, new writers emerged, writers

younger in age, with newer attitudes and approaches towards life. Their link with the society or factors of existence was as deep and intense as that used to be with the earlier writers, and as complicated too. They broke new grounds, responded quite sensitively to the fast-changing times, and their adjustment with the changing sensibility and taste was equally substantial. It is not a fixed group, it is mostly a continuum, that is, newer and fresher talents were being added up from time to time, and beginning from early eighties till today, these writers have dominated Oriya short story scene in very many ways. We list, first, four of these relatively more important writers together, and then we group others, selectively, as per their years of birth. The first four writers are Rabi Pattanaik (1935-1991), Sm. Binapani Mohanty (b.1936), Sm. Prativa Roy (b.1943), and Ramchandra Behera (b. 1945). The other writers are, those who were born in the thirties or little earlier - Bijaya Krushna Mohanty (1928-2005), Priyabrat Das (b.1932), Bhupen Mahapatra (b.1935), Jagannath Prasad Das (b.1936), Bibhuti Pattanaik (b.1937), Umasankar Mishra (b.1937) and Sm.Sakuntala Panda (b.1938); those who were born in the forties - Barendra Krushna Dhal (b.1942), Pravat Mahapatra (b.1942), Debendra Mohanty (b.1943), Naru Mohanty (b.1943) and Bipin Beheri Mishra (b.1945); those who were born in the fifties - Tarunkanti Mishra (b.1950), Sm. Josodhara Mishra (b.1951), Asok Chandan (1952-1988), Jagadish Mohanty (b.1952), Das Benhur (b.1953), Sadanand Tripathy (b.1956) and Surendra Mishra (b.1958) and those who were born in the sixties - Diptiranjan Pattanaik (b.1960), Gaurahari Das (b.1960), Sm. Susmita Bagchi (b.1960), Debasis Panigrahi (b.1965) and Sm. Paramita Satpathy (b.1965).

Rabi Pattanaik was born at Rairangpur, in Mayurbhanj district, and professionally he was a geologist and served in the Geological Survey of India, and his untimely death was grievously mourned. He wrote only in one form, that is, short story, and

acquired a good deal of respectability and reputation. He had 15 story-collections, that include, *Asamajika Dairi* (An Anti-Social Diary, 1964), *Andhagalira Andhakara* (The Darkness of the Blind Lane, 1972), *Raga Todi* (Raga Todi) and *Bahurupi* (Chameleon), both in 1979, *Hirannyagarva* (The Golden Bowel, 1982) *Bisubarekha* (The Equator, 1984), *Raja Rani* (The King and the Queen, 1986), *Bandhya Gandhari,* (Barren Gandhari, *1988), Amarilata* (The Deathless Creeper, 1990) and *Bichitravarna.* The Strangely Coloured One, 1991) etc. Rabi was keenly aware of the social changes and the complications thereto, that came over human affairs towards the end of the last century. Thus in addition to the social and psychological exposures in his stories, he was also keenly concerned with human predicament and the individual's alienated self. A good, illustrative collection is *Bandhya Gandhari,* that contains 16 stories, mainly of socio-psychological nature and refers to contemporary conditions where integrity, honesty and values have been lost. The title-story, for example, shows the decision of an unmarried young girl to the extent of making herself medically unfit for child-bearing on the eve of her marriage, as a protest against the self-seeking cowardly society and the hooligan groom to whom she is getting married under duress. Similarly the story *Guru Dakhina* (Dues for the Teacher) is a devastating exposure of the rot that has overtaken our body-politic - "I became speechless in amazement debating whether I should accept money or not, and stood up, and held both his hands. He kept his eyes on my eyes and spoke in a defiant tone - 'Sir, you slapped me 25 years ago for my disobedient behaviour to make me good, obedient, polite. I can't Sir, slap you back. But for the great crime you committed in teaching false, meaningless morality, I give you now fifty thousand rupees earned through my corrupted ways, as my dues to my teacher" (p.96). Reversely, the story *Nisiddha Nagarira Atma* (The Soul of the Forbidden City) brings out the essential humanity in the hearts of people who are otherwise political

terrorists and killers. Women constitute a large proportion of Pattanaik's stories. He has seen them in many forms, and highlighted them in many activities, and shown them again and again as crucial in forming human character and society. In fact, both the man and the society remain crucial in the frame of Rabi's stories, and he sees them from many angles, as a spectator, as a critic, as a reformer and as a promoter. His stories in the eighties brought in newness and freshness, almost a pioneering creative activity, for the new and coming generation to look forward to.

Binapani Mohanty belongs to Chandol area of Kendrapara district and being trained in Economics served in the Government colleges of Orissa. Her writings started from early sixties, and except occasional forays to novel writing she has concentrated on short story, where she has been established as a major writer and received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990, the first ever Oriya woman-writer to receive the Award. She has written more than 400 short stories that have been collected in about 25 volumes. Some of the important volumes are, *Naba Taranga* (New Wave, 1963), *Kasturi Mruga O Sabuja Aranya* (The Camphor-Deer and Green Forest, 1967), *Tatinira Trushna* (The Thirst of the Stream, 1972), *Andhakarara Chhai* (The Shadows of Darkness, 1976), *Madhyantara* (In Between, 1979), *Bastra Haran* (Rape of Clothes, 1980), *Khelana* (Toys, 1983), *Pata Dei* (Sister Pata, 1987), *Banhi Balaya* (The Circle of Fire, 1990), *Asru Anala* (Fires of Tear, 1992), and *Padma Ghunchi Ghunchi Jauchhi* (Shifting Lotus, 2000) etc. Binapani's views about her own story writing are revealing. She writes - “It is only natural that whenever there is a new turn in time or in struggles for living, the social values change and a new consciousness of life emerges. The changes are in tone, in documentation, and in the entire identity of one's own being.....I should say these aid my stories as well as my experiences and expression.” Binapani's stories are integrated with the society they portray, and provide a free, frank expression of the naked, brutal

reality that surrounds the social man, particularly the woman, and her failures, and unsuccess, and how she is tortured and exploited almost to the extent of a negation of spirit. A representative example would be the title-story of *Pata Dei,* where a woman tortured and exploited by the society and gang-raped, learns to compromise with her agony and suffering, and tries to hit back only when pushed to the brim - a brutal condition of melancholy and compassion - "Suddenly nobody could know what happened, Pata kicked off the old woman's leg and stood up. Like a straight five-feet elderly woman ! A violet colour of mixed confidence and contempt glowed on her face. She picked up the crying child and looked sharply at the villagers - 'Do you want to know who is the father of this child ? O.K., look, look at all these. All these are his fathers. This Ramu, Bira, Gopi, Maguni, Nuria, and all those three or four there at the back.... Well, whose child ? How could I say ? Ask that Haria Bauri who took money from them and left me at Cuttack... Now, please ask them aunt. Let them say, if they have the courage, who's the father." Differently, in the story *Byuhaveda* (Penetrating the Circle) from *Khelana* the protagonist who has to undergo continuous humiliation as well as physical and mental torture because she is a working woman, also resents, but ultimately is reduced to a sheer helplessness and to a pressing desire how to make oneself free - "When she closes her eyes, or when alone, or when even in a crowd, she imagines as if she sees a picture... that is, she is running breathlessly, on hot sands. She is thirsty, her throat is almost bursting, all around only sands and sands, mounds of sands and cruel biting hot sun." In fact Bina's stories have both brutal realism which shocks and cuts through, and thin, border lines of strength and compassion. Her understanding is deep and penetrating, and her awareness of contemporary life is one of the sharpest in modern Oriya literature.

Prativa Roy comes from Balikuda area, in the Jagatsinghpur district. Professionally trained in Education and Psychology she

served in the Government colleges of Orissa, and also as a member of Orissa Public Service Commission. She has written extensively novels, short stories, travelogues etc., and is established today as a very substantial writer of Orissa. Prativa, like Bina, has been deeply involved with social factors and attitudes, and her insight is as probing and sharp. But she has a larger dimension in the sense that she has divergent interests which go to accommodate her to divergent readership. Her story-collections number more than 20 and they include such books as, *Samanya Kathan* (Ordinary Talk, 1979), *Aikatana* (Harmonious Sound, 1981), *Gangasiuli* (Siuli Flower, 1982), *Ghasa O Akasa* (Grass and the Sky, 1984), *Abyakta* (Unspoken, 1986), *Itibrutak* (All About, 1987), *Haritapatra* (Gray Leaves, 1989), *Pruthak Iswar* (Separate God, 1991), *Bhagban ra Desha* (The Country of Bhagaban 1991), stories about the Bonda tribe, *Mokhya* (The Release, 1993), *Ullanghan* (To Cross, 1998) and *Gandhinka Gan* (The Village of Gandhi, 2003) etc. Like Bina, Prativa also speaks about her own craft, and points out that what matters is how best a sensitive and alert writer comes to grip with the contemporary challenges of existence. In her novels and stories these challenges have been shaped substantially and meaningfully with a rare spirit and understanding. Prativa's mode varies in adjustment with times as well as with different humanistic elements and factors of society. For example, the story *Bhadralok* (Gentlmen) from *Ghasa O Akasa* shows the great remorse of a lady for her indifference and misunderstanding related to her one-time well-wisher and teacher, the occasion being the news of her teacher's death and his action in repaying the loan he had taken from her father long long ago-"Subhadra's face reddened in sorrow and remorse, she opened the letter in great anxiety. She was stunned when she read it. Her education, culture, social prestige, wealth, status everything, was raged to the ground by a single letter...". Differently, in another story entitled *Asati* (The Unchaste Woman) from *Haritpatra* she records the woman's

protest most dramatically, almost at par with Bina's Pata Dei's protest - "Like a woman gone mad Tara jumped at those Babus - the Gosein, the Sarapanch, the Saanta. Her veil fallen off, hair dishevelled, eyes spitting fire, she bit and scratched whomsover she could, and shouted, 'I will suck blood from the society that sucks man's blood... I'm Tara,... I'm witch, evil, Chandi, Chamundi...." Prativa's forte has been a remarkable felicity seen in her co-ordination of subject matters and attitudes. No doubt in these, there is a definite trend to uphold what may be called the woman's point of view (her popular novel *Yajnaseni* is a good illustration), but on the whole her stories project a remarkable creative document of an individual's intense emotion vis-a-vis the multiple, corroding problems of the society and social living.

Ramchandra Behera, who comes from Barabatipur, in Keonjhar district, spent his whole career mostly in Kendrapara College, at Kendrapara, as a teacher of English. He writes sparingly, but his four story-collections, published in between 1976 and 1987 established him as a fine, pioneering storyteller of the new generation. The collections were, *Dwitiya Smasana* (Second Cremation Ground, 1976), *Achinha Pruthibi* (Unfamiliar Earth, 1979), *Abasista Ayusha* (The Rest of Life, 1982) and *Omkar Dhwani* (The Omkar Sound, 1987). The subsequent collections are, *Mahakavyar Muhan* (The Face of an Epic), *Banchirahiba* (To Live, 1990), *Bhagnansar Swapna* (The Dream of Faction) and *Phatakanthar Gachha* (The Tree of the Broken Wall) etc. Like Binapani Mohanty, Behera has both insight and perception, and he too, like her, is concerned with the psychological intricacies of his characters. In addition, his stories have a sophistication, like the movement of a mind trained in urban system and activities, and a subtle sense of irony which keeps the general attitude detached even at a point where it appears to be most involved. The title-story of *Omkar Dhwani* is a good example of Behera's creative powers. It is both an objective expansion and an intimate

subjective involvement. On the one hand, it is the holy hymn at the beginning (*Omkar*) and goes back to the ancient times of sacredness and meditation. On the other, it is mundanely involved with a poor, working woman's desire to be called 'ma' (mother) by his dumb son, at which the villagers laugh with derision and indifference. But when it happens, all ugliness and indifference metamorphose into a universal sacredness like the beginning of meditation and love - "Her whole body as if melted. In one burst she pulled the child to her breast like lapping up the most desired. She cried as she laughed, and like a flood, her kisses drowned the child from head to toe." In a brief preface to his first volume *Dwitiya Smasana* Behera speaks of life's endless mystery and complications, and how that can be put into a shape of emotional intensity. His stories are continuous efforts to that end. Sometime it is man's basic instinct to protect oneself in conflict with a compassionate projection to another in a similar plight, as in the story *Trisanku* (In Between), or sometime the tension between the base instinct and the social instinct as in *Barnabodha Patha* (The ABC Lessons). In short, Behera's stories have been remarkable by their precise form, sharp insight and specific point of view. On the one hand, he is keenly aware of the individual's incapacity to face the disintegrating factors of life around him. On the other, his perception goes beyond to larger and more comprehensive factors of life as that provide strength and sustenance to human living. Behera's as well as Prativa's, Bina's and Rabi's are representative voices of the new power and dimensions which the Oriya short story started acquiring beginning from early eighties and spread out across the century.

. Bijoy Krushna Mohanty, who comes from Puri (married to Smt. Brahmotri Mohanty poet), had started writing from early sixties onwards and his first story-collection entitled *Tathapi* (Yet) was published in 1975. Some of his subsequent important story-colleetion were, *Swarabhanga* (Broken Voice, 1980), *Nivruta*

Samlap (Lonely Dialogues, in two parts, 1981 and 1987) and *Prachakshyu* (Spectacles, 1988) etc. Bijoy Krushna's stories were often social in content, about different ways and manners of the social man with a desire to evoke affection, love, sympathy and compassion. He particularly got a good deal of popularity for his sequence of stories collected in *Nivruta Samlap,* about a fictional character 'Abinas' (almost an alter ego of the writer) and about his socio- psychological projections. Bijoy Krushna's stories operate at a familiar level, at times with a subtle element of humour, and with a point of view that invariably emerges from an analysis of the surrounding situation. Some good examples are, *Prachakshyu, Parala* (Cataract), *Prasna* (Question), *Chhagasmarane* (In Remembering a Goat), *Arohana* Ascent) and *Swarabhanga* etc.

Priyabrat Das from Sunahat, Balasore, currently settled in Bhubaneswar, novelist and story-teller, was professionally an administrator, and had his first story volume *Dhusara Dharitri* (The Gray Earth) published in 1976. Subsequently he has three more collections - *Kaincha Phulara Katha* (The Story of Kaincha Flower, 1986), *Niranjana* (Niranjana, 1998) and *Swarna Kamala* (The Golden Lotus, 1994). In a foreword to *Dhusara Dharitri,* Sachi Rautray wrote of the harmony achieved between realism and imagination in Das's stories. In fact, Priyabrat's stories have compact organization, given to the use of spoken language, and provide psychological analysis. They illustrate different aspects of man as a social being, show a keen sympathy for whatever man does, and an insight into the motives of such action. Some illustrative stories are, *Dhusara Dharitri*, *Nadirjangar Sesha Salam* (The Last Salute of Nadirjang), *Biswasghatak* (The Traitor), *Nabanna* (The New Crop), *Aparahanra Chhaya* (The Shadow of the Afternoon) and *Eka Smaraniya Ghatana* (A Memorable Event) etc.

Bhupen Mahapatra from Jaleswar, Balasore, currently settled in Rourkela, story-teller and feature-writer, professionally

an administrator in Government of India's CRPF, has seven story-collections so far, such as *Pruthibi O Pruthibi* (Earth and Earth, 1986). *Pramila* (Pramila, 1994), *Gotie Mendhapala* (A Flock of Sheep), *Khola* (Cover, 2001), *Ebe Bi Rebati O Anyanya Galpa* (Even Now Rebati and Other stories, 2002) and two collections of satirical stories, *Bharata Bhagyabidhata* (India, God of Destiny) and *Chandrasenar Chandraloka* (The Moonlight of Chandrasena). Mahapatra's Stories have two distinct qualities, one is a commitment to the left, a commitment against the routine, continuing systems of society and all its inequalities and discrimination thereto, and secondly, a resentful awareness about the disintegrating values of life and a sharp anger against the people who promote such situation. Mahapatra's style is flexible, of an encompassing nature and often carries different modes and points of view. Some of his illustrative stories are, *Jharana O Military Tambu Gudika Bisayare* (About a Stream and Military Tents), *Minura Bahaghara* (Minu's Marriage), *Pramila*, *Prasnara Bisubarekha* (The Equator of the Question), *Khola, Andharare Anirudha* (Anirudha in Darkness), *Ebe Bi Rebati* and *Bhoka* (Hunger) etc.

Jagannath Prasad Das, poet, is also a substantial story-teller. His story-collections include *Bhabanath O Anyamane* (Bhabanath and Others), *Dinacharya* (Daily Work, 1983), *Ame Jeumane* (We People, 1986), *Sakhyatkar* (Interview, 1987), *Priya Bidusaka* (Dear Joker, 1992) and *Sesha Paryanta* (Till the End). Jagannath's stories have social bearings, and reflect modern consciousness. But what distinguishes them is an inherent attempt to explore intimate psychological twists of human characters at different levels of functioning. The writer is otherwise known as a fine poet, and some of his distinguishing traits in poetry, such as, a sense of general objectivity and an attitude of subtle irony, one may note in the stories too. Some Illustrative stories would be *Ghara* (House), *Dinacharya*, *Chithi* (Letter), *Buddhiani Jala* (The Spider's Web),

Sakhyatkar, *Samasya* (Problems), *Endua* (The Chameleon), *Bhavamurtti* (Self-Image) and *Dekhanahari* (The Onlooker etc.).

Bibhuti Pattanaik from Dingeswar, Jagatsinghpur district, currently settled in Bhubaneswar, novelist and story-writer, pursued a career of teaching in the Government colleges of Orissa. His reputation is mainly as a novelist, but he also wrote a number of stories, collected in such volumes as *Mana Nirjana* (Mind's Loneliness), *Kete Je Basanta Sate* (Really, Number of Springs), *Nila Akhira Nadi* (The River of the Blue Eye), *Anya Eka Bharatvarsha* (Another India), and *Aneka Tarar Ratri* (The Night of Many Stars) etc. Pattanaik's stories have wedded an awareness of realism with a romantic consciousness. His style is simple and felicitous, and the themes generally relate to love, union and separation. A few representative stories would be *Nila Jyotsna* (The Blue Moon), *Bharatvarsa*, *Raj Kannyar Dukha* (The Sorrow of the Princess) and *Kete Je Basant Sate* etc.

Umasankar Mishra from Ramchandrapur, Puri district, now settled in Bhubaneswar, was an administrator who rose from Orissa Administrative Services to Indian Administrative Services. He has been writing since early eighties, and is established today as a significant writer. His collections include, *Umasankar Mishranka Kahani Stabak* (Uma Sankar Mishra's Bunch of Stories), *Sweta Anruta* (White Untruth, 1981), *Trisanku* (Midway, 1982), *Bohubohuka* (Like a Bride, 1987), *Nua Satabdira Phaguna* (The Spring of the New Century, 1988), *Mokhyachakra* (The Circle of Release), *Kanta Bina* (Without Husband), *Prabad Sundari* (The Legendary Beauty) and *Bichakhyanare* (Oh, you Clever Woman) etc. Umasankar's stories have a peculiar felicity of expression, and they exhibit a keen knowledge of Oriya life and customs. But what is interesting in them is their symbolic presentation, that is, the concrete details get significantly organized to present a symbolic meaning of life, and the reader moves away from pieces of life to a contemplation of life's issues and challenges. A good

example is the title-story of *Nua Satabdhira Phaguna* where the hopes for a 21st century are ultimately dashed in the bogmire of lies and corruption. Other illustrative stories would be, *Bohubohuka* , *Sweta Anruta*, *Trisanku*, *Mokhyachakra*, *Patalaganga* (The Hidden Ganga) and *Chakra Byuha* (The Circle of Wheel) etc.

Sakuntala Panda from Cuttack, now settled in Bhubaneswar, short-story writer, novelist, edited *Sucharita,* the most illustrious women's monthly in Oriya, from 1975 to 2004. She has six story-collections so far. They are, *Suryasikha* (The Sun's Flame, 1977), *Andhakarara Ranga* (The Colours of Darkness, 1987), *Anek Dina Pare* (After Many Days, 1987), *Nisitha Surya* (The Night's Sun, 1994), *Jerujelumara Santha* (The Saint of Jerujelum, 1996) and *Manikara Ghara* (The House of Manika). The stories vary from social to socio-psychological and psychological. On the whole they portray man's different situation as well as different aspects of mind - the agony in searching for happiness and not finding it. There are elements of joyous acceptance on the one hand, and keen anger and scepticism on the other. "My characters belong to the society," says the writer, "They do, and provide various levels at which they are linked with the society." Some illustrative stories are, *Anek Dina Pare*, *Anyarupa* (The Other Form), *Andhakarara Ranga*, *Sukhi Manisha* (The Happy Man), *Nisitha Surya*, *Bhanga Ghara* (Broken House) and *Mayara Manisha* (The Illusory Man), etc.

Barendra Krushna Dhal, from Banki, in Cuttack district, now settled in Bhubaneswar, novelist, story-teller and professionally reputed as a probing journalist of current affairs. He has 9 story-collections so far, which include *Panigara* (Water Mark, 1979), *Anesata Run* (99 Runs, 1983), *Klanta Nakhyatra* (The Tired Star, 1988), *Abyartha Mrugaya* (The Invincible Hunt, 1989), *Ekaki Avimanyu* (Avimanya Alone, 1993), *Kalpabata* (The Timeless Banyan Tree, 1997), and *Ganatantrara Mukha* (The Mask of Democracy, 2003) etc. Dhal's stories have two distinct

dimensions. First, the plots are well-organized, have logical sequences and dramatic ending, and the style is simple and felicitous. Secondly, there is always an implicit human element and compassion on the border line which gives a different shape and enrich the structure as a whole, and gives otherwise usual social stories a new turn and motivation. The stories *Ahalya* (Ahalya), *Ahankara* (Pride) and *Call Girl* from *Klanta Nakhyatra* are such stories that tell a tale related to a woman's identity succinctly and with broad lines of compassion. Differently, a story like *Anesata Run*, with a touch of supernatural, establishes the grit of the individual, or *Kharadina-Barsadina*, where social, political and administrative suggestions are joined in a frame, the motivation is one of analysis of agony.

Pravat Mahapatra, from Sankeswar, Tirtol, in the Cuttack district, now settled in Bhubaneswar, served as teacher of English in the Government colleges of Orissa. He writes very sparingly, and has only three short-story collections so far. They are *Chithi Nija Thikanare* (Letter, to One's Own Address, 1981), *Aneka Akhyansa* (Many Latitudes, 1981) and *Marfat Nirabadhi Kala* (Care of Eternal Time, 1994). Pravat's stories, in theme, sensibility and style, have a strong, experimental newness. He cuts across the logical exposition of a story told-well, and moves over to an analysis of consciousness, and pinpoints on a point of sensibility. Thus it is not a round of experience, social or otherwise, it is piecemeal, broken, and tinged with emotion and it turns towards helplessness and uncertainty. The story *Kagaja Danga* (Paper Boat) from *Marfat Nirabadhi Kala* is a good example. It gives an account of a river in spate. But that is only the beginning. What dominates is an environment of destruction and the destructive pleasures of the invader. But the story has many dimensions. First, it is the environment of flood, which is physical; secondly, it is the flood's destructiveness which is both physical and mental; thirdly, the flood is symbolical, it symbolizes destruction and fear and is

realized in the negative darkness of the mind; lastly, it is linked to the experience of the protagonist which is social and political at one level and where there is indications of satire and irony, on the other it is that medium through which the consciousness can proceed towards the enlightened zone of the mind. *Kagaja Danga* shows both the extreme helplessness of modern life, and the capacity to withstand it. Pravat's many stories have this intricate structure and on the whole, they advance a unique awareness of contemporary life and conditions of living.

Debendra Mohanty from Bhadrak, now settled in Rourkela, was trained in Economics, and worked as an administrator in the Rourkela Steel Plant. He had been writing stories, and topical features mostly related to economic issues in the newspapers since early seventies, but his first collection of stories entitled *Agragami* (The Pioneer) came out in 1995. His subsequent story collections are, *Niraba Nathira Kahani* (The Story of a Silent File, 1995), *Mukabhasa* (The Dumb Language, 2002), *Burundara Swapna* (The Dreams of Burunda, 2003), *Papa O Punya* (The Sin and Virtue, 2005) and *Mahula Banare Jhada* (Storm in Mahula Forest, 2005). The stories of Mohanty are intimately linked with the contemporary society that guide his motivation and attitude - a disturbing reflection of the self-destructive changes brought about in the modern environment of living, where all sense of humanity, compassion and relationship are either lost or getting lost, and man's primary image as a sentient being is no more. The issues relate to social, socio-familial, socio-political and socio-administrative uncertainty and instability, and have an implied attitude of satire and resentment against people who have joined together for their own selfish ends to cut the social fabric into pieces. On the one hand, a condition of abject helplessness and futile anger, and on the other, sympathy for the man who suffers, and compassion for humanity as a whole, mark the stories of Mohanty - a powerful creative commentary on man and his

bearings today. Some illustrative stories would be *Agragami*, *Eka Antahina Kahani* (An Endless Stories) *Mukabhasa*, *Nabajanma* (New Life), *Nirbachana* (Election), *Burundara Swapna* and *Apahancha Ilaka* (Forbidden Land) etc.

Naru (Narayan Chandra) Mohanty from Balia in the Kendrapara district, now settled in Bhubaneswar, served in the A.G's office in Bhubaneswar, and writes stories and novels. He has five story-collections which include, *Bata Pau Nathiba Jane Praudhar Durdasa* (The Plight of a Middle-Aged Man who Can't find out his Way , 1981), *Sesha Lokara Bibarani*(An Account of the Last Man , 1983), *Mukhabilokana* (Seeing the Face, 1990) *Pangura Atmakatha* (The Autobiography of a Lame Man, 1991) and *Anya Gati Nahin* (No Other Way , 1997), *Gotie Dukhare Anya Sahajogi Bhumika* (A Piece of Sorrow and other Associated Roles, 2004), and *Sodha Dombaru* (A Tabor Repaid, 2005). Generally Naru's stories deal with middle-class complex, and his protagonist is mostly a lower-middle-class clerk, who continuously fails to establish an identity for himself or develop relationship with others. The title of his first story-collection is symbolical that way-the plight of a middle-aged man who often fails to find a way out for himself. But this is not so much physical as mental, a type of psychological analysis of oneself, an awareness of individual's sense of separateness, loneliness, helplessness and emptiness. In a way, these are general problems of modern existence, and Naru's stories, in a social frame familiar to him, and in a persona 'I', are fine documents of the same - a bold reflection of changing sensibility at the turn of the century. Some illustrative stories would be, *Sesha Prasnara Uttara* (The Answer of the Last Question), *Kolahala* (Noise), *Tebe Tralire Kahinki* (Why in a Trolley), *Anya Gati Nahin*, *Bapanka Luha* (Father's Tears) and *Bandhu Bheta* (Meeting a Friend) etc.

Bipin Bihari Mishra, from Talcher, district Angul, currently settled in Bhubaneswar, was a member of Indian Police Service,

and retired as D.G Police, Orissa. He is a storywriter as well as a novelist, and his writings have broad spectrum of his own experiences as an officer. His story-collections, eleven in number, include *Sapath Santalara* (The Vows of the Santals, 1983), *Manara Mukura* (The Mirror of Mind, 1985), *Asampurna Jhankara* (Incomplete Music, 1994), *Bahudina Pare* (After Many Days, 1996), *Dhuli Jamithiba Bahitie* (A Book Deposited with Dust 1997) and *Mrutusajyara Manchitra* (The Map of a Death-Bed) etc., and two collections of humorous tales, *Daroga Sahityika* (The Police Man of Letters, 1984) and *Hasara Godhuli* (The Twilight of Laughter, 1996). Mishra writes in a felicitous style and often takes recourse to well-developed plots. His stories have social content, provide social analysis and both satire and compassion are implied in his attitude towards life. He writes of tribal people, people from villages, as well as of people around him, and weds experience with realism. A distinctive quality of Mishra's stories lies in his emphasis on man's large- heartedness, and to what extent in spite of many pitfalls that surround a man, he can be accepted as a person of goodness and grace. Mishra's stories please and communicate an aura of joy and satisfaction. Some of the illustrative stories are *Nimantrana* (Invitation), *Nua Sakala* (New Morning), *Chakrabyuha* (The Wheel Circle), *Bahudin Pare*, *Sesha Sujoga* (Last Chance), *Dhuli Jamithiba Bahitie*, *Trakar Babu* (Trakker Babu), *Ta Pare* (Afterwords) and *Gomatira Sesha Hasa* (The Last Laugh of Gomati) etc.

Tarunkanti Mishra from Keonjhar, now settled in Bhubaneswar belongs to Indian Administrative Service and currently works as a senior administrative officer in the Government of Orissa. He started writing early, and his first story-collection, entitled *Abarttara Dwiti Swara* (Two Voices of the Whirlpool) was published in 1969, when he was 19. His subsequent collections are, *Nisangatara Swara* (The Voice of Loneliness, 1980), *Komal Gandhar* (Komal Gandhar, 1984),

Bahubrihi (The Chameleon, 1988), *Paradise Pakhee O Jane Nirastra Atatayee* (Paradise Bird and an Unarmed Killer, 1994), *Bitansa* (The Noose, 1996), *Prajapatira Dena Nahin* (Butterfly has no Wings, 1997), *Akasa Setu* (The Bridge to the Sky, 1999), and *Lubdhakara Rati* (The Night of Lubdhaka, 2002). Tarunkanti's stories show deep acquaintance with human life, along with psychological finesse and intellectual essence. The stories have disciplined structure, avoid verbiage, put emphasis on emotional intensity, and fact and fiction are often joined together in a magic reality. Loneliness is a major theme - a sense of futility that often dogs a man's action is portrayed again and again graphically. Some illustrative examples are, *Chhayaghana Prantarara Seema* (The Limits of a Shadowed Field), *Abasista Pruthibi* (Rest of the World), *Bibara* (The Hole), *Rajanigandha* (The Night Jasmine), *Dine Ratire* (One Night), *Abarohan* (Descending), *Akash Setu* , *Chhyapath* (The Milky Way) and *Lubdhakar Rati* etc. Tarun kanti's has been a new voice, and a very refreshing one.

Jasodhara Mishra from Kalahandi, daughter of eminent educationist and writer Bhubaneswar Behera, currently stays in Delhi with her husband who belongs to Indian Administrative Service. Trained in English literature, she has been teaching in the Government colleges of Madhya Pradesh. She has been writing since early seventies, and is established today as a fine woman-writer writing short stories. Her books are, *Dwipa O Anyanya Galpa* (Island and Other Stories, 1979), *Janharati* (The Moonlit Night, 1987), *Pakhijanma* (The Bird's Life), *Dekhanahari* (The Onlooker, 1992), and *Rekha Chitra* (The Lineal Portraits, 1997) etc. Jasodhara's stories have a special motivation for women, particularly when married as also in family life - to what extent they feel alone and unprotected. The symbol she has used is 'island', as if a woman's life is like an island where all routes are within itself. It is not so much of psychological analysis as an analysis of consciousness, almost in the manner of Kishori Charan Das. Most

of her characters have two levels of operation, one physical and social, and the other immersed in one's own thought-process and manner of awareness. The stories have excellent descriptive structure, and at the same time they are finely adjusted to woman's identity in a changing time and society. The illustrative stories would be *Dwipa* (Island), *Asundara Drusya* (Ugly sight), *Banasai*, *Janharati*, *Yatri* (The Traveller) and *Dwipantara* (Banishment), etc.

Asok Kumar Chandan from Patnagarh, in the Bolangir district, who passed away untimely at the age of 36, had started writing early in life, and quickly grew into maturity both in story as well as in poetry. He had only two story-collections, one published during his life time *Asok Ebam Asok*, (Asok and Asok, 1985) and the other posthumously *Punascha Asok*, (Asok Again, 2000). Asok's stories are in a way experimental. He dealt with love and sex and the extent both form a part of subconscious turn of the mind, not so much as desires for love or sex, but as eagerness for utilitarian aspects of life. He is aware of man's lonely existence and shows that as a part of contemporary living conditions, or shows how a modern man often falls a victim to political exploitation, or how a town-bred individual often gets into hypocrisy and deceit. It is not much of descriptive structure, as a symbolic and poetic structure that we come across in his stories. Some illustrative examples would be, *Safala Sarisrupa* (The Successful Reptile), *Manchitra* (Map), *Bagdatta* (Fiance), *Barsa Rutura Drusya* (A Scene in the Rainy Season), *Overcoat* and *Andharar Swara* (The Voice of Darkness) etc.

Jagadish Mohanty from Gorumahisani, Mayurbhanj, who serves in the mines at Belpahad, in the Western Orissa, has 9 story-collections so far. They include, *Ekaki Aswarohi* (The Horse-Rider Alone, 1979), *Dakhina Duari Ghara* (The House with a South Door, 1979), *Irsa Eka Rutu* (Envy A Season, 1980), *Album*, (1981), *Dwiprahara Dekhi Na Thiba Loka* (A Man Who has not Seen the

Noon, 1983), *Nian O Anyanya Galpa* (Fire and Other Stories, 1995), *Juddha Khetrare Eka Eka* (Alone in the Battlefield, 1996), *Mephistophilisara Pruthibi* (The World of Mephistopheles, 1996) *Suna Ilisi* (Golden Hilsa, 2002) etc. The stories of Jagadish constitute bold expressions of contemporaneity, the futility and complications of modern life, as well as the individual's helplessness, insecurity, and insignificance in the context of shifting social values. On the other hand, there is a keen awareness of the stark details of reality, of real life around one, and a close desire towards leading a free, and care-free life. The writer is largely interested, not so much in plot-based accounts, as in exposing or giving shape to a strand of idea or a mood. Thus his characters do not always carry a round name, but a symbolic presentation, like 'Ja', 'Ka' etc., or even when they have good names, they are mostly routine faceless ones - a desire to link the sense of modern futility to imagination and project one to the other. Jagadish's stories are experimental, have cut new and fresh ground, and have injected a powerful voice to contemporary Oriya stories. Some good examples are, *Dakhina Duari Ghara*, *Rebati* (Rebati), *Albamre Ketoti Muhan* (Some Faces in the Album), *Palei Jibara Rasta* (The Road to *Escape*), *Simabaddha* (Under Limitation), *Eka Romanchakara Hatyakanda Samparkare* (About a Thrilling Murder) and *Pasabika* (Animality) etc.

Das Benhur (Jitendra Narayan Das), from Khandapada, Nayagarh, is trained in Political Science and teacheres in the Government colleges of Orissa. He currently stays in Bhubaneswar. He has 9 story-collections which include, *Navi Samudra* (The Naval of Sea, 1982), *Padma Ghunchi Ghunchi Jauchhi* (The Shifting Lotus, 1983), *Chhai Nida* (Light Sleep, 1987), *Kuhudira Ghara* (The House of Mist, 1990), *Akhyarara Aranya* (The Forest of Words, 1994) and *Dena* (The Wings, 1998) etc. Das Benhur's stories are clear in design, with a logical development of plot, and what is communicated is an absolute sincerity of emotion. The

stories begin with a dramatic turn, but what distinguishes them is not any dramatic development, but of simple manners, behaviour and normal ways of life - a close link with the reality around, but often with an implied pain and agony. The tone of the stories is unhurried, the motivation is towards accepting a situation in its own stride, and the attitude is one of both involvement and detachment. Some good examples are *Jeje* (The Grandfather) where the grandson is ruminating on his grandfather at the time of the latter passing away, *Pua* (Son) that narrates the father's agonies at the loss of his son and *Janha* (The Moonlight), *Sigaret Khola* (The Cigarette Box), *Kau* (Crow), *Badudi* (Bat) and *Pinda Sadhana* (Meditating on the Body) etc.

Sadananda Tripathy from Krupasindhupur, in the Ganjam district, currently settled in Rourkela where he works, writes both stories and novel, and is established as an important story-teller of his generation. He has 10 story-collections so far, including *Anya Jane Sadanda Tripathinka Mrutyu Pare* (After the Death of Another Sadananda Tripathy, 1992), *Ranganath Ghadei* (Ranganath Ghadei, 1993), *Jejha Batare Jie* (Everybody in His Way, 1994), *Nija Nija Niyam* (Every One for His Own Rules, 1996), *Apriya Manisha Ebam Anyanya Charitra* (Unloved Man and other Characters, 1997) and *Sabu Kichhi Purba Nirdharita* (Everything Decided Earlier, 2001) etc. Sadananda's emphasis in his stories is how best that can be told. They have definite directions too, that is, often reflecting the contemporary social system and the fast changing values of life with an implied attitude of satire. But his stories are not fixed at one level. They are experimental, and move from an emphasis on plot, to a character (Ranganath Ghadei), or to a concept or mood, and often mixed reality with fantasy. At the same time his awareness of Orissa's places, characters, incidents, like documenting all that, provides a special distinction to his stories. The story *Atmiya Anatmiya* (Relatives and Not Relatives) is a good example of the portrait-documentation of Rourkela. His

other illustrative stories are, *Motihara* (A Chain of Jewels), *Swadhinata : Suvarna Jayanti* (Independence : Golden Jubilee), *Banya* (Flood), *Jejha Batare Jie*, *Agni Danda* (The Fire Punishment) and *Sati* (Chaste Woman) etc.

Surendra Mishra from Jajpur, writes novels and stories and currently settled in Bhubaneswar. He has three story-collections so far. They are, *Juddha O Anyanya Galpa* (The War and Other Stories, 1991), *Nadiru Akasa Paryanta* (From River to the Sky, 1994) and *Panjuri O Anyanya Galpa* (The Cage and Other Stories, 1998). Surendra's stories at one level reflect the helplessness of modern life, of inability that remains confined within itself, and of desires that never get fulfilled. At another level one moves beyond all that, to an enlightened point of consciousness where desires do not exist, neither any sense of discrimination between the one and the other. Some illustrative stories are *Palabhuta* (The Scare-Crow), *Akas* (The Sky), *Arohana* (Climbing), *Nadi* (River), *Kambala, Suit-piece and Saree* (Blanket, Suit-piece and Saree), *Yuddha* (The War) and *Panjuri* (The Cage) etc.

Diptiranjan Pattanaik from Cuttack, was trained in English literature both in India and abroad, and is currently teaching in Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. He writes sparingly, and has three story-collections so far. They are, *Jane Brahmarakhyasara Atmakahani* (The Autobiography of a Brahmarakhyasa, 1995), *Koti Brahamanda Sundari* (The Beauty of Million Universes, 1999) and *Irsaru Sneha Paryanta* (From Envy To Affection, 2002). Dipti's stories are distinguished by their structure - the way the stories are shaped for presentation, the emphasis all the time being on the process of communication where the stories assure a livingness of their own and promote a detached objective attitude towards life. Awareness of reality, exploration into imagination, environment of non-personal reflection, and a strong essence of emotion, all are linked together in the stories to project a singleness of purpose, and an excellent unit of creative imagination. Some

illustrative stories are *Koti Brahamanda Sundari*, *Mayasuchi* (The Illusory Content), *Rohidas Sorenar Sesha Hasa* (The Last Laugh of Rohidas Soren), *Uchhakankhya* (Ambition), and *Babul Gachhar Chhai* (The Shadow of Babul Tree) etc.

Gaurahari Das from Sandhagada, Bhadrak, now settled in Bhubaneswar, is a journalist by profession, and in addition to stories writes novels, essays etc. He has 12 story-collections so far, which include, *Juar Bhatta* (Ebb Tide, 1982), *Akhada Ghara* (The Club House, 1989), *Jibanara Jalachhabi* (The Water-Mark of Life, 1993), *Bharatvarsa* (Bharatvarsa, 1994), *Punarabrutti* (Repetition, 1995), *Mati Kandhei* (The Clay Toy, 1995), *Maya* (Illusion, 1998), *Ghara* (The House, 2000) and *Kagaza Danga* (The Paper Boat, 2002) etc. The process of exposition of Gaurahari's stories is descriptive, but logical and impersonal, and the tone is objective. It is like seeing a thing from a distance, weighing the pros and cons and coming to a balanced view of things, a part of the personal, involved point of view. This is best seen in his slightly later volumes like *Punarabrutti* and *Maya* etc. The writer is mostly interested in man-woman relationship, its pain and pleasure as well as intensity, which for him is both a matter of experience and existence, and to which such social issues as poverty and woman's problems etc. are intimately linked. Some illustrative stories are, *Maya*, ;*Charulata* (Charulata), *Raktakta Aviseka* (Bloody Installation), *Stree* (Wife), *Mokhya* (Release) and *Pahad* (Mountain) etc.

Susmita Bagchi from Bhubaneswar, now settled in Bangalore writes stories, novels, and travelogues, and co-edits *Sucharita*, along with her writer-mother Sm. Sakuntala Panda. Her stories have diverse locations both inside India and abroad. She has five story-collections so far. They are *Akas Jeunthi Katha Kahe* (Where the Sky Talks, 1990), *Chhai Sepakha Manisha* (The Man on the Other Side of the Shadow, 1991), *Naibedya* (Offering, 1996), *Bhinna Kula Anya Dheu* (Different Store, Different Wave,

1997) and *Basudhara Prasna* (The Question of Basudha, 1999). The stories of Susmita, first of all, have good narrative structure. They are clearly laid out, and almost always carry an element of suspense as a part of the structural development. Then they have a pervasive social structure where emphasis is often put on family relationship, such as on familial or mother, husband relationship. A good example is the story *Rahugrasta* (Eclipsed) from *Basudhara Prasna,* where doubts have been raised to find out what is relationship or whatever one calls' relationship, is that so, or how does that influence the deepest desires of man. Another story *Matru Charitamruta* (About the Mother's Character) also deals with a similar problem, the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship and portrays the pain of life outside the familial and social confines. There are other illustrative stories too, such as *Bhinna Kula Anya Dheu*, *Adhiswari* (The Lady-Ruler), *Chhai Sepakha Manisha*, *Aina o Anya Pratibimba* (The Mirror and Other Reflections) and *Akasa Jeunthi Katha Kahe* etc. Susmita's psychological insight and emotional intensity have added clarity to her exposition and have made many of her stories memorable.

Debasis Panigrahi is member of Indian Police Service, and is currently posted in Cuttack, and so far, he has only two story-collections - *Tathakathita* (So Called, 2000) and *Atindriya* (Beyond Senses, 2004), and having a total 24 stories. Panigrahi's stories have a detached style, that is, as if somebody is looking at the concerned scenes and happenings from a distance, and what is given is not so much of involvement as of assessment, like balancing the pros and cons. In fact the stories have two continuous streams, running paralled to each other, as also getting overlapped and superimposed on each other. One is a continuing involvement, and the other, a continuing assessment and what is projected is a strong emotion, disciplined and organized. Two title-stories, *Tathakathita* and *Atindriya* are good examples. Panigrahi is a competent writer, and his creative sesibility is sharp and pointed.

Paramita Satapathy, from Cuttack, daughter of Prativa Satapathy poet, belongs to Indian Revenue Service, and currently stays in Bhubaneswar. She has three story-collections so far, they being, *Bibidha Aswapna* (Miscellaneous Non-Dreams, 1997). *Bhasakhyara* (The Alphabetical Language, 2000) and *Birala Rupaka* (Rare Images, 2003). The stories have social frame and environment. But the motivation is related to individual identity, an analysis of the same, and particularly to what extent such identity suffers from uncertainty and helplessness. Different stories shape it in different ways. but generally they have a commonness - the trends of experience are sorrowful and are given to mental unhappiness, and restlessness. The story *Bismruta Bihanga* from *Bhasakhyara* is a good example, where the protagonist goes through different levels of mental reactions. Other illustrative examples are, *Chandrasila* (The Moonstone), *Kankrit Kankrit* (Concrete Concrete), *Sishu Dibasa* (The Children's Day), *Kitadrasta* (Worm-Eaten), *Birala Rupaka*, *Bibidha Aswnpa* and *Papa Punya Ba Semiti Kichhi* (Virtue, Sin, or Something like That) etc. Paramita's stories convey a good deal of present day agony and loneliness, and her organization as well as exposition of experience are able and competent.

New Flowering : Novel

(*i*)

Gopinath Mohanty has been the greatest and most important novelist in the post-Independence years in Orissa. We have already made references to him. So too, we have referred to Surendra Mohanty, another very substantial novelist, as well as to such senior novelists as Kanhu Charan Mohanty, Laxmidhar Nayak and Nityananda Mahapatra, all of whom made mark in the early decades after Independence. But, qualitatively, novel is not as strong a force as we note in the case of poetry first, and short-

story next, though production-wise it has been quite prolific (One statistical survey points out about 1500 novels in the post-Independence years). Apart from the above writers, the names of four more writers may be noted, who beginning from early sixties, have been more or less continuously in production, and have written a large number of novels each, and have acquired good deal of reputation severally. Each one of them is also established as a substantial short-story writer, and in a way, in the post-Independence Orissa's creative world, they have a name and fame to reckon with. They are, in order of age-seniority, Satkadi Hota, Santanu Kumar Acharya, Bibhuti Pattanaik, and Sm. Prativa Roy. All of them have received an important provincial literary award of Orissa, that is, Sarala Award, and two of them, Acharya and Sm. Roy have also received, in addition, Central Sahitya Akademi Award.

Satkadi Hota has so far more than 22 novels, some of which may be noted, such as, *Byakula Hrudaya* (Worried Mind, 1966) and *Swapna Siuli* (Dreamy Moss, 1967) etc. early novels, as well as , *Ete Swapna Ete Aloka* (So Many Dream Such a Lot of Light, 1976), *Aneka Diganta* (Many Horizons, 1981), *Asanta Aranya* (Restless Forest, 1984), *Satabdhira Sosha* (The Thirst of the Century, 1986), *Prathama Adhyaya* (The First Chapter, 1987), *Rajdhanir Ranga* (The Colour of the Capital, 1988), *Asamaya* (Untimely, 1989), *Muhanmuhin* (Face to Face, 1992), *Muktimantra* (Chantings for Freedom, 1998) and *Janani Janmabhumi* (Mother and Motherland, 2002), etc. Hota's major themes relate to fast-moving social and political changes that came over Orissa after Independence - migration from the village to the town in search of preferment and identity, transformation of characters motivated towards selfishness and position, a disruption in values and disintegration in relationship, in short, a general attitude of uncertainty and instability on the one hand, and on the other, an awareness how emerging social issues can be properly placed,

need of social equality can be established, characters can be reformed and integrity of perception can be maintained, and how a shape can be given to one's own identity against adverse conditions.

An important suggestive reference in Hota's novels relate to the city, and how the living conditions in the city significantly affect a man's character and ideas. Thus in such well-known novels as *Prathama Adhyaya* and *Rajdhanir Ranga,* published in consecutive years, the city concerned is Bhubaneswar, the capital city of Orissa, where the city's corroding features are laid bare in stark reality. The former shows how, to what extent, the middle-class educated people are motivated by self-interest towards wealth, power and position. The novel is both a fine document of the life style of such people, and at the same time, at a different level, a sharp castigation of their hypocrisy and falsehood. Similarly in the second novel, the attention is focused on what happens under the glittering facade of the capital- seething corruption, lies, dishonesty, naked race for personal preferment, and a complete loss of character and moral values, Elsewhere, too, for example, in a slightly later novel, entitled *Muhanmuhin* , Hota provides a similar exposition of the capital city - corruption, deceit and lies, with a difference that a woman's character is presented whose grace and integrity stand as a bull-work to the corrosions around. The woman's strength is also seen in another well-known novel of Hota, that is, *Asanta Aranya,* which is an account of courage and grace seen in the personality of a woman in the context of tribal and political unrest in the jungles of Bangirposhi, in Mayurbhanj, and the extent to which human relationship can rise above adverse situations to provide a wholesome and becoming existence. Differently, in a novel like *Satabdhira Sosha,* a social evil like dowry, has been brutally exposed and castigated - the purpose being, as the writer says, to make the people conscious of this obnoxious social disease, so that they can stage a relentless war

against it. Hota's vision is broad-based and sees into the depth of contemporary social malady.

Santanu Kumar Acharya, who emerged as an important novelist in the sixties and seventies, made extensive use of psychological analysis. He had a good range - beginning with a symbolic novel *Nara Kinnara* (Man Half Man, 1962), he moved to novels with autobiographical overtones, and later to political attitudes *(Sakuntala,* Sakuntala,1980). His slightly later novel *Dharitrira Kanda* (The Earth's Cry, 1994) was a perceptive exposure of socio-political habits of the contemporary man, again with autobiographical references. Acharya's total number of novels would be eleven, which include, in addition to the ones mentioned above, *Satabdhira Nachiketa* (The Nachiketa of the Century, 1965), *Tinoti Ratira Sakala* (The Mornings after Three Nights, 1969), *Jatrara Prathama Pada* (The First Step of the Journey, 1973), *Dakhinabartta* (The South, 1973), *Anya Samaya Anya Eka Bharat* (Another Time, Another India, 1977) and *Mantrinka Share* (The Minister's Share, 1988) etc. Acharya, like Hota, is keenly aware of changing perspective after Independence, of the changing system of values, and the process of existence. But what he is basically concerned in his novels is to vindicate the individual's own identity in the context of the hostile and crumbling environment.

The protagonist of *Nara Kinnara,* Acharya's first novel, one George, a castaway child, without a shelter or any trace of parentage ("Whose father is the overcrowding banyan tree of the hospital and mother the stinking drain.") George represents the 'castaway humanity' of India even after 15 years of Independence, without any right, position and self-respect. Though George, the protagonist, is also confident of man's ability, yet the post-Independence illusion grips hard and the common man continues to be as much insulted and injured as before. The trend continues in Acharya's two subsequent companion-novels, *Satabdhira Nachiketa* and *Tinoti Ratira Sakala.* The novels have

autobiographical references and the projection is an India of seething corruption, exploitation and deceit - a dream of great glory and Independence gone wry. But the strength of humanity is also projected, the strength which arises from a pursuit of truth, even in the midst of a degenerated society, and the ancient story of the Nachiketa of the Upanishads has been recreated in the modern parlance. *Sakuntala,* Acharya's next substantial novel, and probably his best, carries this search for truth to a fruition - in the projection of a process of living that shows violence and intolerance, combines all political experiments, builds up on the deepest traditions of the past, and is suggestive of a becoming, wholesome society. Acharya has understanding and insight, often goes beyond what is on the surface to essential substantiality, and contributed a new, bold voice to Oriya novel during the post-Independence decades.

Bibhuti Pattanaik, in contrast to Hota and Acharya, has been greatly prolific, He has an unprecedented continuity in writing, and beginning from 1955, when his first novel was published, till today, in a period of about 50 years, he has had more than 80 novels, in addition to a number of story-collections and other types of writing. Some of the more well-known novels may be noted as follows - *Priya Bandhabi* (Dear Friend, 1955), *Ei Gan Ei Mati* (This Village, this Earth, 1959), *Chapalachhanda* (The Swift-Footed Woman, 1961), *Ei Mana Ei Brundabana* (This Mind this Vrindaban, 1964), *Nayikar Nama Srabani* (The Heroine's Name is Srabani, 1964), *Badhu Nirupama* (Nirupama, the Daughter-in-Law, 1967) *Tume Trushnara Jala* (You, the Water of Thirst , 1974), *Aswamedhara Ghoda* (The Horse of Aswamedha, 1983), *Bandi Jajabara* (The Imprisoned Bohemian, 1986), *Dipa Talara Drusya* (The Scene Beneath the Lamp, 1988), *Dinakala* (The Times, 1998), and *Jibana Sauda* (Bargaining for Life, 2002) etc. Pattanaik's novels have a broad sweep, frequent romantic trends, and display a keen sensitiveness and intelligence in the assessment of present day life.

Three early novels of Pattanaik, *Priya Bandhabi, Ei Gan Ei Mati* and *Chapalachhanda* suggest three main thematic directions of Pattanaik that were laterly elaborated and established in his subsequent novels. The first is man-woman relationship, the relationship between a youngman and a young woman, the link being love, which leads to marriage and union and even reversals, at times, to separation. Almost half of Pattanaik's novels deal with this theme. The second is an intense desire for the village and the rural life, as against urban ways of living. *Ei Gan Ei Mati* had its frame in the post-Independence Oriya village life. Other good examples are, *Sesha Basanta* (Last Spring), *Oda Matira Swarga* (The Heaven of Wet Earth) and *Badhu Nirupama,* etc. The third makes references to socio-political issues, supported by Pattanaik's own leanings towards the left, and towards a strong awareness of socialistic realism. Thus, for example, *Chapalachhanda* is related to pre-Independence ex-State's movement, The other books are *Prathama Sakala* (First Morning) and *Ghana Kuhudira Dina* (The Days of Dense Mist) etc. about share-croppers' movement, *Hasakandara Chhanda* (The Rhythm of Sorrows and Happiness), and *Aswamedhar Ghoda* etc. about election-politics; and *Nayikara Nama Srabani* and *Bandi Jajabara* etc. about the corruption and deceit of political leaders and their henchmen. *Dipa Talar Drusya,* one of Pattanaik's later novels, which works out emotional complications of middle-class characters, and links socio-political realities with the fictional creations, combines many of these trends together. As was pointed out, Pattanaik's forte has been to portray relationship, and added to a very felicitous language, his novels have acquired a great deal of popularity and recognition.

Prativa Roy is also quite prolific. Her novels, so far, are 19, in addition to story-collections that number 21, and travelogues 8, and in the popularity-scale, she is the most popular writer today in Orissa, and most popular novelist. Her novels started to be published from mid-seventies, in contrast to Hota, Acharya, and

Pattanaik who had earlier beginnings, and by mid-eighties she was already established as a major writer and was awarded Jnanpith's Murti Devi Award for the novel *Yajnaseni* published in 1985. Her other novels include, *Barsa Basanta Baisakha* (The Rains, the Spring, the Summer, 1974). *Parichaya* (Identity, 1979), *Punyatoya* (Related to Holiness, 1979), *Asabari* (Asabari, 1980), *Nilatrushna* (The Blue Thirst, 1981), *Silapadma,* (The Stone- Lotus, 1983), *Uttaramarga* (The Way After, 1988), *Adibhumi* (The Primal Land, 1993), *Mahamoha* (The Great Illusion, 1997) and *Magnamati* (The Sunken Earth, 2005), etc.

Prativa's novels have a variety of subject matter and interest. At the same time she has adopted appropriate technique to suit the particular theme and the discourse. Her motivations too, vary, and she tries to bring different levels of perception in one structure. A good example is *Yajnaseni,* which is at the same time, an account of the *Mahabharat,* a study of relationship, a probe into the mental states of distress, dismay and emptiness, a protest against male chauvinism, a declaration that all war is futile, and finally a rejection of heavenly benefits in favour of the limitations of the human world. In about 450 pages the novel is a comprehensive account of Draupadi as she sees herself with relation to various *Mahabharat* incidents and characters - an interesting work with a strong intelligent contemporary feminist attitude towards the great, ancient epic. A similar attitude is also seen in *Silapadma,* which combines a fictional account of the times when the Konark temple (the famous 13th century temple) was built, with contemporary realities, and with implied feministic motivation. But differently, in *Uttarmarga,* another fine novel, there is no past, neither any mythological or historical reference to build upon, but only hard realities related to the present time. It combines an account of the freedom-struggle, with an account of the writer's late father who was a leading freedom-fighter. The novel's structure is a synthesis of reality with imagination, and refers to changing situations and

characters and their hopes, aspirations and suffering beginning from 1920, till Independence, and for sometime beyond it, Yet differently, in *Adibhumi,* another important novel, dealing with the Bonda tribes of Southern Orissa, and rooted to the concerned locality, the past and the present are not seen as separate segments, but as a continuum that sustains the movement for life. Prativa's latest novel, *Magnamati,* about the Super Cyclone of October, 1999, is an exalted threnody of joy, faith and courage - a highly perceptive account how even in a devastating calamity, multiple segments of life get linked and integrated. Prativa's narratology in her novels is complicated, and her understanding of contemporary existence is both acute and penetrating.

(ii)

As we have already noted the post-Independence decades in Orissa, were crowded with novels and novelists. No doubt this was because of the changes that took place in the matters of human living that provided immediate impulse to the novelists, novel being a sensitive agency to record such changes. Gopinath Mohanty's stature dominated the decades. But it was not alone he, we have noted how many other competent novelists filled in the scene, added different dimensions to Oriya novel-writing, and enriched it as a whole. It would be further established if we look at some individual novels, some 'good' novels we may say, that were published at different times, beginning from 1950, that carried on the tradition of good novel-writing and contributed to the total achievement, both severally and collectively. Such novels are, *Amadabata* (Untrodden Path, 1951) by Sm, Basant Kumari Pattanaik (b.1927), *Jantrarudha* (Astride the Yantra, 1967) by Chandrasekhar Rath, *Aji Kali Paharidina* (Today, Yesterday and Day Before, 1986) by Rajendra Prasad Das (b.1930), *Debadasi* (The God's Dancer, 1989) by Sm. Bijayini Das (b.1944), *Desha Kala Patra* (The Country, the Time, the Character, 1992) by

Jagannath Prasad Das, *Amruta Phala* (The Fruits of Nectar, 1996) by Manoj Das, *Purbapara* (Before and After, 1998) by Naru Mohanty, *Punarnaba* (Rebirth, 1999) by Dinanath Pathy (b.1942), *Ghurni* (The Whirlwind, 1999) by Bhabani Pattajoshi (b.1953), *Jagannath Swami* (Oh Lord Jagannath, 2000) by Balaram Pattanaik (b.1928), *Srotaparna* (Leaf in the Stream, 2000) by Sm. Susmita Bagchi, *Padatika* (The Foot Soldier, 2001) by Surendra Mishra, *Premaspada* (The Beloved, 2002) by the present writer, and *Abartta* (The Whirlpool, 2003) by Priyabrat Das.

Amadabata, a social novel, deals with the living conditions and difficulties of an Oriya middle-class family settled in Cuttack town, the specific issue being to give away the daughter in marriage, which is finally done. In the process the whole structure of Oriya middle class family is laid bare with its joys, happiness, limitations and dependence that became an archetype of all such families that had settled in towns in the post-Independence period in Orissa. At the same time there is an ubiquitous presence of a sense of loss, incapacity, and helplessness, where people strive after joy, happiness and homogeneity only to find that such things do not sustain on the face of changing social mores and individual intransigence. *Amadabata* is a fine social document, a fine portrayal of a young woman, named Maya, who incidentally, has probably become the most-loved woman-character in the entire post-Independence Oriya novel, and who slowly learns how to come to terms with social reality, and by implication the novel provides a sharp exposition of a woman's identity and dignity. An example involving Maya's parents is a pertinent one - “Mahibou sat on a chair and gazed fixedly at her husband's face, As if she was saying to herself - 'I married you but you have killed me. No male will ever understand this sorrow of death. This is dying bit by bit, a living burial. Who knows the destiny of how many unfortunate like me would not be pressed under the feet of their husbands.' She turned her face and wiped away the tear coming out of her

eyes... Pitambar Babu got hurt... But what else he would have done ? What the women generally want - husband, income, house, ornaments, clothes - he has given unhesitatingly to his wife. But never this murmuring of unfulfilled desires in his wife's heart has reached his ears, or may be unknowingly he has avoided it... Lamentation inside the house. He gazed inertly outside, at the sky, The same lamentation, as if the atmosphere is now full of the heart rending wailing and lamentation of women, and the hideous noise dulls the ear."

Yantrarudha also deals with middle-class people, but its orientation is different. Though it has a social frame, and its protagonist is very much a social being, round whom all the social events and the characters circulate, it is only the frame. Basically it is the story of an individual who goes through various phases of life, but as a tradition-bound man who never deviates from the trodden-path, and being caught in the coils of life, he accepts that as his destiny. The main conflict is between what he intensely desires and how he can do away with that, the aim being to what extent the sleeping consciousness can be awakened. Thus while one leg is bound in the circle of illusions, the other is put out of it and is eager to respond to the call of the distance. The novel *Yantrarudha* is a movement towards higher consciousness, a creative document where the writer's spiritual, philosophical and psychological attitudes have been synthesized.

Aji Kali Paharidina is a social novel, but again, with a difference. It is in the form of reminiscences where the protagonist goes back in time to his childhood days in the village, and subsequently to his youthful days as a student in the town. It has a racy, narrative structure, and contains many events and situations particularly related to the days immediately before and after Independence, which have an old-world charm and fascination. But what is more relevant is the account of a young, sensitive mind which is alert at every turn of event, goes through agony,

suffering and joy, and grows slowly into an understanding of life and acquires insight into the depth of living. Though a first novel of the writer, it is an interesting and exciting work of art.

In *Debadasi* a part of *Amadabata*-motivation can be seen-upholding the dignity and identity of woman, in the trials and tribulations of the last of the *devadasis* or temple-dancers in Lord Jagannath's temple at Puri. The protagonist, a young woman of parts, lived through extremely adverse situations, but never permitted herself to be humble or being compromised, and remained a bright example of dedication even after death. The criticism of the custom is provided only at the end, as a sequel, when the remarkable account of the protagonist, the last of her tribe, is over. The criticism acknowledges the dedication and purity, but resents the corruption and hypocrisy that had crept into the custom. *Debadasi* remains a singularly interesting novel. Apart from projecting a woman's sterling character, it documents an ancient socio-religious custom, that had grown evilsome through time, with insight and competence.

Desha Kala Patra is not exactly a novel. It is a fictional account of the difficult and ambitious times, towards the later part of the 19th century in Orissa, a time commonly called as the 'renaissance' of Orissa. The protagonists are many, mostly living characters, from Madhusudan Das to Gaurisankar Roy and John Beams etc., important persons, who participated in the growth of 'new' Orissa, The events are also many, from political to social and cultural. The book has an excellent fictional form that weds imagination with reality, and links documentation with motivation and attitudes. Thus the incidents and events that appear detached and separated at one level, unite at another level as a wholesome oneness, and recreate and revive a time and habits long lost and forgotten, a seminal creative work that makes *Desha Kala Patra* a quite exciting document.

Amruta Phala is a novel with philosophical content and

philosophical attitudes, related to the process, purpose, and relevance of life. It depicts a continuous search for truth, to find out the source from which items of life have emerged, and the attempt to return these items to the same source. Thus words and phrases like (in translation) 'consciousness', 'consciousness independent of the body', 'spiritual personality', 'relativity of *experience based on physicalities' and 'spiritual ascension'* recur often and their nuances provide the motivation. A relevant passage may be quoted - "I am looking for truth, for wisdom and joy. I feel those are real. But why I can't realize them, that is my question. Whatever I think of joy is only a distorted image of that. Whatever- I think to be truth appears later to be all false. But what is the measurement yard that finds it false. Surely, of truth. That means the truth is inside me, and yet not in me. It is my desire to realize the truth that plays hide and seek with me" (P.138) *Amruta Phala* is a two-tier novel, a novel within a novel, or more correctly, two independent accounts linked together by subtle attitudes and motivation, one goes to the past and the other to the present, and the style of writing also varies. Structurally the novel is not that much integrated as it should have been, and there are frequent repetitive statements and declarations, Yet the novel carries a strong content, a powerful motivation and a felicitous presentation- a *fresh, unusual novel in the total oeuvres of post-Independence* Oriya novels.

Purbapara has both a social content as well as a psychological documentation of an individual's changing mind-set in his pursuit of identity and truth. The social references relate to education, employment and profession etc. as well as to linkages between the village and the town. Side by side, the psychological complications mostly relate to an individual, the youngest son of the three sons of a village school teacher, who comes from the village to the city in search of education and employment. He gets both, though not exactly to his liking, and only after going through

a wearisome continuous struggle throughout. Structurally, both the aspects are linked with each other. The psychological ramifications grow out of the social context, and in their turn give the latter a shape and dimension. The protagonist's attitudes towards the familial developments are jointed with his attitudes towards his own developments as a writer wherein he fails to provide himself a sense of stability and fixity, Thus the end-result is one of deep uncertainty and loneliness - "It appears there is nothing like relevance, truth, justice, character, all moral yardsticks have become irrelevant. Man is a slave to situations. To triumph over the situation is only a dream. May be one gets satisfaction in controlling one or two events or pieces of action. But the moment after that is empty, dry. It is the same when a child feels happy when he gets a toy, and breaks down when the toy breaks. This world is full of childlike laughter and cry." (P.359). *Purbapara,* with autobigraphical strands, is an exciting, powerful novel, finely crafted and strongly projects, both relevance and irrelevance of man's tenuous existence in the modern times.

Punarnaba is an unusual novel both from the points of view of content and style. It has many distinctions. First, in a way, it is a social novel - an exhaustive account of the tradition of Vaishnavism, and *Matha* (monastery) culture in southern Orissa; secondly, the writer being himself an eminent artist, the novel depicts the trials and tribulations as well as joys and triumphs of an artist in projecting his convictions about art and beauty, thirdly, it provides the mental development of two individuals from mundane surrounding to a spiritual finesse and enlightenment; and lastly, the style is a unique blending of a prose account, both racy and imagist, with continuous nuances of poetry-linking twin actions of a writer and a painter. In the context of a 300 - year-old *Matha* culture, though in bad shape yet sticking to its original strength, and a widely held religious belief in Radha-Krushna relationship, the story is the relationship of two young individuals, a man and a woman, growing towards a faith and oneness of

perception - an artist's testament of faith and conviction in life. *Punarnaba* is a unique novel, both structurally and texturally, that opened up a new dimension in post-Independence Oriya novel as a whole.

Ghurni is a compact social novel, well-organised, related to socio-educational corruption and its baneful effects on body-politic as a whole - a rare novel, with a bold, courageous point of view. The story relates to an individual, a socially motivated educationist, who returns to his village to head and organize a college, which he does, goes through harrowing experiences, and finally leaves the college. In the process numbing details of self-motivated educational corruption and racketeering, specially as related to tertiary education, is revealed and exposed. The protagonist's experiences and reflections are mixed with the sequence of events, and his own identity goes through a tenuous relationship with the community identity. The novel carries satire and sympathy in equal measure, and has a subtle sense of pain and agony, all crafted in a spoken, colloquial language - a good, satisfactory novel on an urgent, socially relevant theme.

Jagannath Swamy, a socio-religious novel, a long narrative one, in about 600 pages, relates to Lord Jagannath of Puri, that is the extent to which Lord's presence at Puri becomes the centre of all activities there, and motivates all actions of all men, and provides an overpowering fertilizing influence on socio-cultural life in general. The novel has many aspects. First, the Lord Himself, His rituals, worship, scheduled activities, the 'bhoga' offered to Him as food and His innumerable continuous fairs and festivals. Secondly, the large number of people, called 'Sevakas', who serve Him daily, all of whom are settled at Puri, around the temple, and who have been doing their scheduled work in fixed categories for the last hundreds of years - a strictly tradition-bound community, and yet going through changes coming over through change in time. Thirdly, the general social life at Puri, man-man or man-

woman relationship, and how in spite of the penetration of the Lord's influence, the life in general, revolves round its own factors, like life anywhere else in modern times, both with joy and pain. Lastly, it is the story of the protagonist who belongs to one of the Sevaka families, fallen to bad days, yet free and independent-minded, who loves and marries, and works with a single-minded purpose and ability. to maintain his own identity in which he succeeds at last, and comes to a point of recognition and respect. In fact, *Jagannath Swamy* is a novel of epic-proportions, a comprehensive account of Puri life and culture motivated by Jagannath-worship, and with a sharp insight into how a tradition-bound society changes, and changes rapidly on the impact of modern times. It is an unusual, unique book, written by a person integral with the life at Puri - a fine creative document that moves easily between physical realities and subtle spiritual perceptions.

Srotaparna is also an off-beat novel. It has subject matter rarely taken up as such by Oriya writers, that is, the Partition, and the subsequent migration of families from East Bengal to Calcutta, and finally at last, for a few, to Cuttack. The distance from Pabna (East Bengal) to Calcutta and then to Cuttack is a long distance. Besides the characters involved were many, and the times were also not very convenient, that included even the assassination of Gandhiji. But the novel keeps the tracks of all details, provides a wholesome insight into the mental certainties or uncertainties of people, explores whatever relationship they do have, pinpoints a quiet growth of confidence in the protagonist, a young woman, and frames the whole account objectively in a precise, felicitous language. *Srotaparna* is a good book, basically about the depth and understanding of human relationship - a good addition to contemporary Oriya novel, more so by a young woman-writer.

Padatika, a social novel, structurally appears to have two parts, early part, an account of sensitive contacts with the rural surroundings, and the later part, where the protagonist moves out

of the limited compactness of the village towards a larger area of selfishness, competition, and hard struggles for life - an area where the protagonist's attempts to establish his own identity often ends in futility. We have already noted such themes and attitudes earlier, in *Purbapara,* as well as in *Aji Kali Paharidina,* in a way, one may say a common reaction of sensitive souls towards uncongenial and unfriendly surrounding factors. But the tone in the later part of the book appears to be hurried and the sequence of events episodic. As a result the structural integration is not satisfactory, and the later part leaves an impression of disjointedness. The early part of the novel depicting the writer's sensitive inwardness with rural nature around, reflects a familiar trend in Oriya novels, and by itself, an interesting account. An example - "The river has fallen dry by the time the summer holidays had begun. Soft grass had grown in the river-bed. The cattle grazed there. For the first six days of the holidays Puranjan walked along with the cows on the river bed, sat beneath the bald banyan tree, climbed the tree at Sapanapata and slept on the branches, dreamt looking at the hard sun of the noon, crossed fields after fields and plucked berries from the bushes and ate them, and looked sharply at the sky and the earth, the moon and the stars, and at the light and at darkness." (p.49).

Premaspada is an experimental novel. Its duration is 24 hours, location a premier college in Cuttack, and characters, teachers and students of the college. The theme is relationship between a youngman, a teacher, and a young woman, his student, and the attitude is how best this tenuous relationship can be maintained. The answer is yes and no, that is, it can be maintained and yet it may not be, the obstructing elements are not from any social stigma, for which the parties involved do not care much, but from a sense of personal uncertainty, insecurity and from an inability to pursue one's own conviction. *Premaspada* is basically an analysis of a mind-set, the story of a restless,agitated soul. An

example - “Bijoy returned. She had left then. If she came why did she leave so suddenly ? Why didn't she wait a little ? She is not happy ? Am I happy ? Why did she get married, if she did not want it ? Bijoy got startled. As if somebody was shouting at his ears... Shut up, who are you to say so ? You can speak a lot. I can also speak... It's far into night. Bijoy looked at his watch. Past midnight. Even now the sound of marriages were coming from far and near. Probably Chandrakanta's marriage had begun. Why Mitra is keeping away from his wife ? What has happened to Manjari ? Her husband is a man of personality, a high officer. It was a clear night. One could see innumerable stars in the sky. The wind was soft and slow. The houses on both the sides were quiet. The lights were all out. Where was he walking ? In the road of the city, or in the middle of the sky ?” (P.85).

Abartta has social content, the account of a man's rise to power and wealth, and how administrative corruption eats into the entrails of the social fabric. The details of corruption are graphically narrated, how it has been a way of life in the contemporary set-up in India, and how every officer or employee, whatever he is worth, is willingly or unwillingly becomes a party to it and furthers its ways, and the thought of the country or the thought of the welfare of the people for whom the administration subsists is minimal. There is a counter strain that all that is despicable, extremely harmful, yet the corruption persists and flourishes. *Abartta* is a disturbing book, a bold, outspoken one, a sharp satire at the powers that be, a highly relevant one for the present time.

In addition to the above, we may also note a few other competent novels published during the period. All these novels, as a whole, provide a continuing, fruitful tradition of novel-writing in the decades after Independence. The novels had a good range, and many of them attained a good deal of popularity with the reading public. They are - *Amabasyara Chandra* (The Moon of

the New-Moon Night, 1964) by Gobind Das (b.1926), a diversified and bohemian life-account of a single character, named Paresh Kaul, having distant echoes of Bhagabati Charan Varma's Hindi novel 'Chitralekha', an unusual and popular book; *Andha Muhani* (The Blind Mouth, 1967) by Debraj Lenka (b.1939), the story of the growth of a girl-child, and her tribulations and strength of mind; written in a fresh, colloquial language; *Stree* (Wife, 1967) by Prasanna Kumar Mahapatra (b,1936), the story of husband-wife relationship, in two sections, with particular emphasis on wife, along with changes that come along, in the context of Buddha and Buddhis't environment, a good mix of history and heritage; *Neta* (The Leader, 1973) by Ganeswar Mishra (b.1942), account of anxiety, preparation and attendant complications of an election related to polities and political manouverings; *Satlez Ru Zira* (From Satlez to Zira, 1979) by Dayalal Joshi (b.1926), referring to the Partition and its aftermath and how some people resettled at Baragarh, on the bank of the river Zira, with emphasis on Gandhian ideals; *Mundamekhala* (Mundamekhala, 1981) by Anadi Sahoo (b.1940), account of the political agitation of the Naxalites in the southern mountainous regions of Orissa along with elements of pathos arising out of socio-personal bonds; *Madhabira Madhurati* (The Honeymoon Night of Madhabi, 1981) by Sm. Gayatri Basu Mallik (b.1932), about a strong woman-character set in semi-rural family surroundings; *Sapua* (The Snake charmer, 1982) by Braja Mohan Mohanty (1935-2001), deals with the snake-charmers, in a village near Bhubaneswar famous for such people, and the changes the tribe has gone through in the recent times, probably the only such book about a little-known tribe; *Chhinnapatra* (Torn Leaves, 1985) by Suryanarayan Acharya (b.1928), related to contemporary realities and man's propensities to earn money and grow rich; *Durga Padibara Bela* (The Time for the Castle to Fall, 1988) by Padmaja Pal (b.1947), about how political manipulations can eat into the cosiness of village life and cripple the farmers - a

strong castigation against the prevailing modes; *Kunti Kuntala Sakuntala* (Kunti Kuntala Sakuntala, 1989) by Binapani Mohanty, that depicts the travails of a young innocent girl ırom a village, a victim of hostile social forces in a male-dominated society, who could finally rise to a position to assert her personality; *Nija Nija Panipath* (One's own Panipath, 1990) by *Jagadish Mohanty,* that deals with the life and union-politics in the mines in Westera Orissa and the related complications of human relationship; *Nilam Bibi* (Nilam Bibi, 1990) by Annada Rakhit (1927-1998), that portrays the growth of a young girl to youth and finally to old age and her continuing attempts to establish her own identity; *Sunaputar Loka* (People of Sunaput, 1991) by Hrusikesh Panda (b.1955), about the ordeals of a tribal community that had dreams about Independence but subsequently became the victim of the motivated, so called post-Independence developmental actions that dispossessed them again and again.("The dhangadas of Sonaput are not yet awake, the dreams have not yet bit the eyes of dhangadis, the memories of moonlight have not yet faded, the rhythm of dance not yet broken, when the Government's people jumped down from the vehicles and shouted 'Go, go, go wherever you want. This land belongs to the Government") - a symbolic, disturbing, worth-while novel; *Satati Dinara Sati* (A Chaste Woman for 7 Days, 1993) by Kishori Charan Das, depicts the psychological complications and the strong femininity of a strong-willed young woman immediately after marriage, a remarkable first novel of the eminent story-writer; *Nighancha Swapna* (Dense Dreams, 1996) by Sm. Adarmoni Das (b.1930), settled in U.K., that describes the childhood and young days of a woman (almost autobiographical) who grew up in an Orissan village, on river Birupa, through social changes and changes in time; a fine account, full of old-world charm; *Chatighara* (The Inn, 2002) by Tapan Pattanaik (b.1951), gives the account of a place named Ratnagiri, a mountainous, scenic railway station, and compounding the

varieties of life of people living there; *Gayaka* (Singer, 2004) by Akhaya Mohanty (1937-2003), a novel, based distantly on the life of Balakrushna Das, musician, written in an intimate, perceptive manner, by another equally famous musician; and *Saradah Satam* (Hundred Autumns, 2005) by Tarunkanti Mishra (b.1950) about the refugees who got settled in Dandakaranya, after the Partition, the socio-administrative complications etc.

New Flowering : Drama

(*i*)

We have noted how Manoranjan Das's dramatic talent dominated the post-Independent decades till about 1980s and how he set the tone and the mode as the taste and sensibility for the drama changed. For various socio-cultural reasons the fifties provided a very opportune ground for dramas to flourish. They could be conveniently staged, there was a ready and appreciative audience, and the publishers were eager to publish the dramas immediately after they were staged. Apart from Manoranjan whose first phase nationalistic, leftist, and socio-political dramas, staged between 1947 and 1951, provided a pointer to the new line of dramatic development, we have already noted the dramatic achievements of Ramchandra Mishra, Gopal Chhotray, and Bhanjakishor Pattanaik, the stalwarts who dominated the fifties and early sixties. But there were a good number of other dramatists too, who ably supported them and contributed to the total dramatic enrichment at the time. Some such dramatists were, Kamal Lochana Mohanty (1921-1991), Pranabandhu Kar, Bhubaneswar Mahapatra (b.1925), Byomakesh Tripathy (1929-1997), Dhaneswar Pattanaik (b.1929) and Basant Kumar Mahapatra (1931-1991), and their relatively more important plays were, *Kirani* (The Clerk, 1958), *Daka Bangala* (Dak Bunglow 1960), *Matrumangal Kendra* (The Maternity Centre, 1961) and *Pipasa* (The Thirst, 1961) by Kamal

Lochan; *Swetapadma* (The Lady like White Lotus, 1958) and *Asanta* (Restless, 1960) by Pranabandhu; *Kachakanchana* (Glass and Gold, 1959) and *Golakdhanda* (The Labyrinth, 1962) by Bhubaneswar ; *Simhadwara* (The Lion's Gate, 1963) and *Suna Pharua* (The Golden Casket, 1964) by Byomokesh; *Uthapacheri* (Raise the Wall, 1959) and *Adibasi* (The Tribals, 1961) by Dhaneswar ; and *Sesha Sravana* (The Last of the Rains, 1965), *Mukti Masala* (The Freedom's Torch, 1969) and *Kachaghara* (The Glass House, 1970) by Basanta Kumar. The trends continued and spilt over to early seventies, and little laterly we may note a few other dramatists, such as, Ananda Shankar Das (b.1929), Jadunath Das Mahapatra (b.1929), Purna Chandra Kanungo (b.1930), Gopal Chandra Pattanaik (b.1931), Nilakantha Mishra (b.1932), Himansu Sabat (b.1933), Prafulla Kumar Rath (b.1936), and Akhaya Mohanty Kasyap (1942-2005).

The plays, as a whole, written and staged during this period had a general social frame, dealt with contemporary social issues, largely confined to middle class people who were newly emerging to wealth and position after Independence, often exposed the seamy sides of the society, and invariably pinpointed man-woman relationship - love and otherwise. The social issues they took up severally as themes and elaborated upon, referred to such aspects as poverty and struggle for existence, Hindu-Muslim amity, the waywardness of children who often deviated from what the parents wanted, family discord, the ostracism of caste and community, the division between the town and the village and the lure of the former for the youngsters, the power and pelf of the neo-rich, political deceit and chicanery, as well as love of young people, their relationship, and their emotional ties, union and separation etc. It was quite an activity on the face of it. But by later sixties and early seventies the dramatic effervescence of the fifties and early sixties had largely subsided. Most of the professional theatres that used to stage plays regularly had either winded up or had

ceased to be regular. In short, the sensibility and the taste had changed, and the traditional social plays were no longer in a position to hold the interest of the theatre-going public. They wanted newer perception and newer perspective. Manoranjan Das's play *Aranya Phasal* staged by an amateur group, in 1969, heralded the new objectives. He was ably supported by four of his junior contemporaries. They were, Bijoy Mishra (b.1936), Biswajit Das (1936-2005), Ramesh Chandra Panigrahi (b.1943) and Kartik Chandra Rath (b.1949), They were respectively, from Balipatna, Balasore ; Jajpur ; Dharakot, Ganjam ; and Berhampur, and except Rath who stays in Cuttack, all others got settled in Bhubaneswar. Looking at the number of dramas they wrote, Bijoy had 18 to 20 plays, Ramesh had 16 to 18, and Kartik had maximum, more than thirty. Only Biswajit did not have many, only about 12 plays, But the cumulative influence of all their plays merged with the pioneering influence of that of Manoranjan, and got new trends and new consciousness in Oriya drama firmly established in the later part of the century.

Bijoy Mishra's first play entitled *Janani* (Mother) was published in 1960. His subsequent plays, staged and published in the sixties were, *Asanta Graha* (Restless Planet, 1964), *Timira Tirtha* (Dark Place of Pilgrimage, 1965), *Prateekhya* (Waiting, 1966), *He Swarga Bidaya* (Farewell, Oh Heaven, 1967), *Asatya Sahara* (Unreal City, 1968) and *Saba Bahaka Mane* (The Pall-Bearers, 1968), etc. and in the seventies *Ethi Sethi Sabuthi* (Here There Everywhere, 1971), *Dwiti Suryadagdha Phulaku Nei* (About Two Sun-Burnt Flowers, 1972), *Jadukar* (The Magician, 1974), *Tata Niranjana* (On the Bank of Niranjana, 1978) etc., and later *Jane Thile Raja* (There was a King Once, 1982) and *Parasuram* (Parasuram, 1984) etc. Bijoy's early plays were related to social environments and social issues, particularly in his subject-matter and character-arrangement. But the approaches and motivation became different later. First of all, there was sympathy and

compassion for the distressed and the neglected, and a sharp hatred for the rich and the powerful for their dissolute behaviour. Secondly, there was an awareness of helplessness, unhappiness, uncertainty and lack of effective communication in the affairs of men. For example, in *Asanta Graha* the quest for happiness ends in helplessness and bitterness ; in *Prateekhya,* in the location of a railway station, waiting for communication to ward off isolation ends in greater isolation, and lack of communication ; in *Asatya Sahara* desires for health in social life ends in social disorderliness and disgrace; in *Dwiti Suryadagdha Phulaku Nei* and *Jadukar, two* experimental dramas that deal with intellectual exposition, the end of the youngsters involved is in a pitiable uncertainty. Similarly, *Jane Thile Raja*, in a political frame, shows the ultimate degradation of human values and character, and in *Parasuram* the circles of complete darkness - the environment of greed, lust, envy, malice, deceit and lies.

Bijoy's plays provide a symbolic process, the purpose being to search for life's identity and dimensions. On the one hand it is an analysis of life's uncertainties and destitution. On the other, it is an implicit assessment of the life portrayed. In this connection, *Saba Bahaka Mane* provides a complete range of motivation. The play has no story, only a course of action or inaction, with reference to a particular situation, in a dark night, in a lonely house, where a few persons earlier unknown to each other, have taken shelter, the 'action' being how to remove a dead body found in the house. *Seba Bahaka Mane* is a symbolic drama, that has developed twin aspects of 'darkness' and 'death'. The end-statement of one of the characters is significant - "Why so worried ?/ There is a corpse/ So what ?/ The man is no more living./ Rather all of us who are standing between life and death,/ Worried/ Thinking whether we will live or die/ Let something be done for us." The dead-body which the pall-bearers think of carrying is not outside them. The sense of death is a part of their mind-set. Bijoy's plays, as a whole,

communicate that - the restlessness, uncertainty, loneliness, lack of communication and an overpowering sense of futility which man has to go through, as essential parts of his living condition in the modern times.

Biswajit Das's first two plays, entitled *Banhi* (Fire) and *Nisipadma* (The Night Lotus) were published in 1957. But his real debut in new drama began in later sixties, when his four plays were published in quick succession, and he was established as a substantial writer of the new mode. The plays were, *Nalipan Raja O Kalipan Tika* (The Red Card Queen and the Black Card Ace, 1968) *Nija Pratinidhinka Tharu* (From our Own Representative, 1968), *Suna Sujane* (Listen Oh, Good Men, 1969) and *Mrugaya* (The Hunt, 1970). Later, 30 years after, two more plays came out. They were, *Om Sri Sri Prajapataya Namah* (Oh, Bow to You, Lord Prajapati, 2000) and *Mahamaya Opera* (Mahamaya Opera, 2000). The early plays of Biswajit had good thematic and character arrangement, almost in the manner of the plays of the fifties. Thus, his earliest play *Banhi* dealt with family problems, had social motivation and socio-political considerations. But the next play *Nisipadma* had a different design. It had, no doubt, a social frame, and dealt with one of the prime desires of man, how to attend to hunger. Yet it veered to psychological analysis, and what emerged as the main motivation relates to life's uncertainties, irrelevance and disorderliness.

These lines were pursued more elaborately in Biswajit's later sixties' plays. *Nalipan Raja...* which deals with the play of destiny in life (a distant echo of 'Oedipus') and ends with sharp mental suffering, uncertainty and unhappiness - the helplessness to accept a most unpleasant reality. Similarly, in *Nija Pratinidhinka Tharu*, which is about a dutiful journalist, we note a shattered family life, repentance and penitence, political lies and helplessness, as well as an acute suffering and unhappiness. *Suna Sujane* too, is psychological, an analysis of complex human desires based on

the clashes between good and bad. *Mrugaya,* probably Biswajit's best play, elaborates all these approaches. In the beginning, as also in the middle and towards the end, 'darkness' provides the main symbolic motivation, and the drama's structure as well as the action of the characters have been organized in the circles of darkness related to the primal desires. The realization has extended to a number of directions - to social, social experience and social discrimination, as well as to individual life, from dreams to negligence, to restlessness. And that which dominates the play's perception is an intense sense of agony and helplessness in which both the individual and the society suffer. Thus at the end, as in the beginning - "Sarathi (relaxed) Ah ! What a night !/ Mukta (laughing as before) : Only the sea and the sky, the sky and the sea ! / Bibekananda (Suddenly looking around with wide open eyes) : Where is that ? Were is the night ? Where is the sea ? Where is the sky ?" *Mrugaya* is a highly suggestive play, its attitudes, point of view and total motivation show a sharp insight into the tortured, suffering soul of the modern times, and Biswajit's plays, as a whole provide a deep understanding of the same.

Ramesh Panigrahi's plays, at least most of them, were all staged beginning from mid-sixties till the end of the seventies, though they were published a little belatedly, between 1970 and 1997. In addition, Panigrahi was associated with a number of Oriya Jatra parties, for whom he wrote about 20 Jatras (Yatras). His first play, entitled *Mukti Mandap* (The Freedom Pavilion) was staged in 1964, but was published later, in 1991. His first important play was *Mu, Ambhe O Ambhemane* (I Myself, We and We All, 1969). His subsequent, important plays were, *Bindu O Balaya* (The Point and the Circle, 1971), *Jane Mahapurusanka Janma O Mrutyu* (The Birth and Death of a Great Man, 1973), *Dhrutarastrara Akhi* (The Eyes of Dhrutarastra, 1977), *Durghatana Basata* (Due to an Accident, 1981) and *Mahanatak* (The Great Drama, 1984) etc. In *Mu, Ambhe...* in the location of a bus-stand, a number of persons

of different categories have got together, and their purposes and likes and dislikes have been analysed. Such people are restless purposeless youth, selfish self-centred politicians, and neglected community of teachers etc., and such mental aspects as helplessness, unethicality, and deceit etc. have been merged at a point of bitter reality. Similarly, in *Jane Mahapurusanka...* we have an analysis of a sick mentality that ends in humiliation and deceit, in *Dhrutarastra...*, in the context of a family we have on the one hand pitiable degradation of human values and on the other, an environment of deceit, lies, jealousy, and in *Durghatana Basata,* the characters who have gathered in the 'drawing-room' in Hell are not only circumscribed by feelings of vengeance, jealousy and selfishness, they themselves are in a dying state and suffering from the agonies of life. All that suggest the most important trend in Panigrahi's plays, that social environment as it is, not indicative of health and happiness, but an expression of mental uncertainty, instability and degradation. All that is put on bold relief in a slightly later play *Mahanatak*, where symbolism linked with satire pervades all actions, characters, and environment, as well as all dimensions - social, political and administrative etc., everywhere decay and degradation being indicated. Thus the King's order-"Then this is my order- our Kingdom should run only in darkness. Light should not enter into Hastinapur", and later, the condition of the country-"The rich, green earth is dry, cracking, the ponds dry, the roads full of thieves, the habitations full of wild animals." The perception in Panigrahi's plays is a total agony and total suffering, physical, mental and spiritual, a sharp intelligent exposition of many failures of our time.

Kartik Chandra Rath's first play was probably *Sabuja Surya* (The Green Sun) which was published in 1966. His subsequent relatively more important plays are, *Jibana Jajna* (Life and Oblation, 1969), *Swargadwara* (The Passage to Heaven, 1970), *Smruti, Santwana O Sunyata* (Memory, Consolation and

Emptiness, 1971), *Samudrara Ranga Jantrana* (Suffering is Sea's Colour, 1972), *Jaughara,* (The Wax House, 1972), *Trutiya Pruthibi* (The Third World, 1973), *Ajira Raja,* (Today's King, 1973), *Mansara Phula* (Flowers of Flesh, 1975), *Mu Duhen* (Together, 1976), *Iswara Jane Jubaka* (God, a Young Man, 1979), *Chaiti Ghoda* (The Spring Horse, 1980) and *Sukasari Katha* (The Tale of a Parrot and Myna, 1981). Most of the plays of Kartik deal with social problems and social issues and thereto effective mental situations, such as, the conflict between the haves and have-nots, the urgency of employment, the plight of a parentless castaway child etc. along with acute loneliness of lone individual life, Thus in *Jibana Jajna* and *Swargadwara,* the picture of social decay and the individual's unaccounted for greed, infatuation and ennui; in *Smruti....* and *Jaughara,* in the context of adverse situations, corroding suffering, helplessness and failures of life; in *Mu Duhen, Samudrara...* and *Iswara...* suggestions and analysis of different social situations, such as tendency towards crime, corruption and unemployment; and in *Ajira Raja* and *Sukasari Katha,* a strong disapproval of self-centred, opportunistic actions that break the social cohesion into pieces. *Mansara Phula,* one of the best plays of Kartik, highlights many of these trends strongly. In 13 segments, its theme is both social and political, that is, power-politics linked with caste discrimination and the clash between the haves and the have-nots. Particularly, one of the main purposes of the play is to register the Dalit identity through social resistance. But the sharpest castigation is against the mentality that gives rise to power-politics and its concomitants - dishonesty, deceit and hypocrisy, that have unfixed man's existence and have reduced him to pitiable condition. The writer's projection to this effect is unsparing - "For me politics is a business - a business. Invest money, and win the elections. Win the election and earn money." And again the hypocrisy of it all - "Not only that - in another 10 years no unemployment, in 7 years all houses will have tiled roofs, in 5 years all illiterates would

be literate, and in 3 years nobody will remain hungry." Social and political consciousness and an analysis of that, is a main trend in modern Oriya drama, and in Kartik's dramas too. Their message is not only highly relevant, but equally fearsome.

(ii)

The enthusiasm for drama that was noted in Orissa in the decades after Independence, was to a large extent abetted as we move towards the end of the century. The professional theatres had almost closed down, and due to rising cost and other infrastructural difficulties, amateur groups found it hard to stage plays whenever they wanted to do it. Besides, a number of alternative sources of entertainment became available to the viewing-public, who found them more convenient and less time consuming. Thirdly, the mode of traditional Jatras underwent a sea-change towards the eighties. They got reorganized in the model of films, brought in spectacular elements, gave up mythological moorings, and on the whole came closer to stark reality and contemporary social problems. All that proved a big challenge to drama and took away a large chunk of public looking for entertainment.

Thus it may be said that a general impoverishment started in Oriya drama particularly in the last two decades of the last century. But that is not the whole truth. Drama flourished, though its tempo was slightly lessened. The two main trends, that is, one towards a strong social consciousness and analysis of contemporary social problems, and the second, an intense psychological probing to provide insight into the changing mind-set, continued as before. To that were added a few more interesting dimensions. For example, after 1975 Emergency, and may be because of it, greater emphasis was put on political and social satire, either expressed explicitly or implicitly. Secondly, a distinct sympathy grew up for the Dalits, that is, for people lower down in the social strata.

Thirdly, the traditional idea about women was changed and they were put forth aggressively with a mind of their own. Fourthly, the emphasis on entertainment aspect of drama was reduced to the minimum. Lastly, the dramas started to be written in local dialects, moved away from the set stages and set infrastructure, towards simplicity, easiness and normal routine manners. The post-80 Oriya drama is not as exciting as it used to be in the decades after Independence. But it has its own characteristics and relevance, and can be reckoned as a substantial creative unit.

In this connection we may note some of the well-known dramatists and their dramas. First, those dramatists who had started writing before the eighties but came to be established as such after the eighties and afterwards. They were, according to age-seniority, Jagannath Prasad Das (b.1936), Bana Behari Panda (b.1940), Harihar Mishra (b.1940), Chandrasekhar Nanda (b.1941), Manmath Kumar Satpathy (b.1944), Kunja Roy (b.1945), Ramesh Das (b. 1945), Ratnakar Chaini (b.1945), Anand Ch. Pahi (b.1946), Niladri Bhusan Harichandan (b.1946) and Hrushikes Panda (b.1955). Their, relatively more well-known plays are, respectively, *Suryasta Purbaru* (Before the Sunset, 1977), *Sabasesha Loka*(The Last Man, 1980), *Asangata Nataka* (Inconsistent Drama, 1981) and *Sundar Das* (Sundar Das, 1993) by Jagannath Prasad Das; *Ajira Sambad* (Today's News, 1982), *Avinaya* (Acting, 1983), *Aranya* (The Forest, 1984), *Subarnarekha,* (Suvarnarekha, 1987) and *Samadhan* (The Solution, 1989) by Ban Behari Panda; *Nindita Gajapati* (Abused Gajapati, 1977), *Adrusya Nata* (Invisible Actor, 1980), and *Sambhav Asambhav* (Possible Impossible, 1993) by Harihar Mishra; *Amesabu Chandrasena* (We all Chandrasenas, 1985), *Rajanigandha* (Night Jasmine, 1986), *Kasturi* (Musk, 1997), and *Aparajita* (Undefeated, 2001) by Chandrasekhar Nanda; *Aranya Banhi* (The Forest Fire, 1982), and *Manisha Gachha* (Human Tree, 1985) by Manmath Kumar Satpathy; *Kalantara* (Change of Time, 1979), *Apratihata Kharavela* (Indomitable

Kharavela,1979) and *Nayak Chandrasena* (Chandrasena the Hero, 1992) by Kunja Roy; *Nisiddha Ilakar Kavya* (The Poetry of Forbidden Area, 1982), *Ajhal Udei De* (Let the Sails Fly, 1986) and *Gotie Bichitra Naksa* (A Strange Map, 1987) by Ramesh Das; *Asthira Upatyaka* (Restless Valley, 1980), *Athacha Chanakya* (Alternatively Chanakya, 1982), *Nagapheni Rutu* (The Cactus Season, 1985) and *Suna Kalasa* (The Golden Jar, 1998) by Ratnakar Chaini; *Rekhachitra* (The Lineal Picture, 1993), *Haji Jaithiba Manisha* (The Lost Man, 1996) and *Dara* (Fear, 1999) by Anand Chandra Pahi; *Satya Samsaya Salbega* (Truth, Suspicion, Salbeg, 1980), *Bhima Bhoinka Sandhanare* (In Search of Bhima Bhoi, 1981), *Swargarohana* (Ascending Heaven, 1987) and *Munda Upare Chhata* (Roof Above One's Head, 1992) by Niladri Bhusan Harichandan; and *Sabdantara* (Across Word, 1995), *1799* (1997) and *Vascodagama* (2000) by Hrushikesha Panda.

In the second and later group, we may note the writers whose dramatic careers began mostly after 1980, and who came to prominence in the subsequent years. The relatively more important dramatists have been, as per age-seniority - Rabindra Nath Das (b.1942), Subodh Pattanaik (b.1947), Mihir Kumar Meher (b.1951), Bijoy Kumar Satpathy (b.1952), Ratiranjan Mishra (1952-2005), Narayana Sahu (b.1955), Pramod Kumar Tripathy (b.1955), Ranjit Pattanaik (b.1957) and Shankar Tripathy (b.1961), Their plays are, respectively, *Bisarna Pruthibi* (Sorrowful Earth, 1978), *Angara* (Cynders, 1989), *Antima Parba* (The Last Phase, 1992), *Dakhina Daraja* (The South Door, 1993) and *Kanhu* (Kanhu, 1998) by Rabindra Nath Das; *Ethu Ante* (After This, 1979), *Ho Bhagate* (Oh, Devotees, 1982) and *Ekai Brahma Nana Rupe* (One Being in Many Forms, 1993) by Subodh Pattanaik, *Ahata Prajapati* (Injured Butterfly, 1982) and *Ajatasatru* (Without an Enemy, 1995) by Mihir Kumar Meher; *Kansara Atma* (The Soul of Kansa, 1980), *Khyudhita Sarisrupa* (Hungry Reptile, 1982), *Karna* (Karna, 1992), *Sonita Swakhyara* (Blood Signature,

2000) and *Pralaya Pare* (After Deluge, 2001) by Bijoy Kumar Satpathy; *Aruna Rangar Pakhi* (The Red-Coloured Bird, 1979), *Aste Aste Amabasya* (Slowly Darkness, 1980) *Dekha Barsa Asuchi* (See, Rains Come, 1980), *Satarka Sanghamitra* (Cautious Sanghmitra, 1981) and *Machha Kandana Swara* (The Sound of Fishes' Crying, 1995) by Rati Ranjan Mishra; *Asra Khoji Buluthiba Iswar* (The God Who Looks for Shelter, 1989), *Upasana* (Worship, 1990), *Kahani Saba Sesha Lokara* (The Story of the Last Man, 1992), and *Subarna Sakala* (The Golden Morning, 1993) by Narayana Sahu; *Bula Kukurara Janma Brutanta* (The Birth Account of a Stray Dog, 1983), *Suna Parikhya Dandadhari* (Listen, Oh Parikhya, Holder of Royal Sceptre, 1983) and *Nisanta* (The End of Night 1988) etc. by Pramod Kumar Tripathy; *Tito* (Tito, 1981), *Ichha Banam Padmanav* (Desire Apropos Padmanav, 1987), *Danabiya* (Animality, 1988), *Goitha Baba* (The Kicking Baba, 1993) and *Gan* (The Village, 1998) etc., by Ranjit Pattanaik; and *Sarisrupa* (The Reptile, 1991), *Sagara Sangam* (The Confluence with the Sea, 1992), *Kavya Purusa* (The Poetic Personaliy, 1992) and *Ravana Chhaya* The Shadow of Ravana, 1998) by Shankar Tripathy.

Beginning from Jaganmohan Lal and Ramsankar Roy till Ratiranjan Mishra, Pramod Tripathy and Shankar Tripathy, it is a long road that Oriya drama traversed through ups and downs and many turnings, and came across such landmarks as Kalicharan Pattanaik and Manoranjan Das. As a whole it has been an exciting journey, continuously enlivened by new and newer experiences, both global and local, by range of information and perception coming from abroad as well as in what it inheres in its own tradition and system of social values. It is a substantial and solid creative achievement, and its contribution in the analysis of changing contemporary existence is informed with intelligence, insight and vision.

New Flowering : Essay

Essay, as such, as serious meditation on life, or on social factors, or even on individual manners, habits etc., or as serious projection of contemplation and intelligence, could not record much achievement in the post-Independence Oriya literature. This appears unfortunate as essay had a strong tradition in Oriya literature, particularly so, when one thinks of the rich crop of essays in the decades before Independence. In fact, essay had a rich growth before Independence, and we have seen the substantial group of writers who wrote with distinction, and were responsive to the prevalent intellectual climate. It is not so in the post-Independence days. Yet the few meritorious writers we come across do react intelligently and imaginatively to the changing patterns of life as well as to its multiple varieties. The best of the group has been Chittaranjan Das (b.1923) who wrote in the tradition of earlier essayists on a variety of socio-cultural topics, and with great distinction and intelligence, and almost always with a view to develop man's sustaining power to live meaningfully and cogently in a generally hostile surrounding. It was essay, one may say, that moves to a creative height, which campares very favourably with such work done before Independence.

Chittaranjan Das (born at Bagalpur, in the erstwhile undivided Cuttack district) is a highly prolific writer. Apart from essays, he translated innumerable books including books by Sri Aurobindo, wrote a number of biographies as well as his own autobiography, books of literary and socio-literary discussions, a good number of travelogues, and his own diary entitled *Rohitara Daeri* (Rohit's Diary) which has been published so far in 23 volumes. He has more than 30 collections of essays, probably the largest number of published-volumes of any essayist in Orissa, anytime. Some of his relatively more important volumes are - *Sila O Salagram* (Stone and Divine Stone, 1958), *Kete Diganta* (So Many Horizons, 1972), *Tarang O Tadit* (The Waves and the

Lightening, 1975), *Jatire Mu Jabana* (I am a Pagan by Caste, 1979), *Pasyati Disi Disi* (Can See Many Directions, 1986), *Aramya Rachana* (Unpleasant Essays, 1986), *Odisa O Oriya* (Orissa and the Oriyas, 1988), *Sukar O Sakretis* (Boar and Socretes, 1989), *Au Eka Drustire* (From Another Point of View, 1990), *Biswaku Gabakhya* (A Window to the World, 1994), *Charma Gharichhi Sina* (Only the Covering of Skin, 2001), and *Sikshya Manishara Dharma* (Education is Man's Religion) etc.

An important aspect of Chittaranjan's essays lies in his continuous responses to changing times. It is not just an act of documentation, though documentation forms a part of the structure. It rises beyond that, to analysis, to assessment, to project a point of view. The process is pithy, disciplined, cautious, and always advances arguments of an intelligent mind, a mind that carefully considers the pros and cons of a problem, and provides conviction of meditation and contemplation. Two directions of Chittaranjan's essays can be generally noted. One is his wide range - his easy movement from social to socio-cultural and socio-political, and his eagerness to take up all experiences of the social man. The second is his sensitive and alert contact with the atmosphere of ideas, originating globally and traversing almost everywhere. One or two examples would be apt. The first is from *Kete Diganta,* one of Chittaranjan's finest books, where he refers to the relationship between literature and politics - “The dreams of a writer are basically different from the dreams of a politician. If there is an extensive revolution outside it would lead to an equal churning inside, is only a fond belief of the political man. The writer proceeds from inside, to outside. If there is a change inside, it would not take much preparation to have a similar change outside. In fact, when a faith grows within, even though the outside structure appears to be broken, the writer continues to keep faith on the holiest values of life." (p.107). Or from the same book, referring to the writer's duty in the context of an industrial culture - "What

would be the duty of a writer when an age of machine and industry is rushing on us ? In order to provide correct direction to industry the writers have to make themselves seasoned with life. The literature's orientation with life does not depend upon holding to a new technique or a new ism. If the writer's understanding of life gets motivated by factors of life, then only the literature can be life-giving and life-nourishing." (p.153) . Differently, in a later volume *Biswaku Gabakhya,* he speaks reflectively on what can the real strength of man - "What is that real strength of man ? What is the real solution to his sorrows ? So long we continue to enlarge our so called sorrows, the sorrows will never go, neither we would be able to cross the fences of agony. We can cross those sorrows only when we expand ourselves. The meaning of expansion lies to what extent we can have sympathy for others. We have to give up our diseased habit of carrying all our sorrows as a load on our head". Chittaranjan, almost single-handedly shaped Oriya essay after Independence and put it at par with the best anywhere else.

The other people who made mark as essayists and acquired distinction have been, Harekrushna Mahatab (1899-1987), Binod Kanungo (1912-1990), Manmohan Chaudhury (1915-2003), Bhubaneswar Behera (1916-2001), Baidyanath Mishra (Prof. Econ., b.1920), Radhanath Rath (Prof. b.1920), Surendra Mohanty, Mohapatra Nilamoni Sahu, Chandrasekhar Rath, Kisan Pattanaik (1930-2005), Basudev Sahoo (Prof. Econ., b. 1933), Manoj Das and Sarat Kumar Mohanty (b.1938-2006). Mahatab, an eminent politician, historian and novelist, wrote a regular column entitled 'Gan Majlis' (The Village Gossip) in the daily *Prajatantra* that he edited. These were short, pithy pieces, almost like forceful discourses, and often with a strong point of view, on a wide variety of subjects related to contemporary cultural, social and political issues. Those were subsequently collected in multiple volumes under the same title, *Gan Majlis* and earned national recognition

(Sahitya Akademi Award) for Dr. Mahatab. Surendra Mohanty, novelist, wrote a weekly column in the daily *Sambad,* which he edited, under the title 'Sesha Stamva' (Last Column). These were also short pieces, precisely organised in style, with a point of view, and on a variety of socio-cultural topics. But unlike Mahatab's pieces that were reasoned ones and impersonal, and generally meant to carry their points home, Mohanty's were mostly in the form of personal reminiscences, tempered with the creative writer's imagination, with a view not to persuade, but to make the readers thoughtful and ruminative. These pieces have been collected in multiple volumes under the same title, *Sesha Stamva.*

Like Surendra Mohanty, Mahapatra Nilamoni Sahu and Manoj Das, otherwise story-tellers and novelists, also seasoned their essays with a fine, ruminative creative personality, and their essays too, were serialized in the daily newspaper *Dharitri.* Nilamoni's pieces are almost like stories, full of an old-world charm, and written in a very felicitous, colloquial style that roots the reader very pleasantly to his surrounding. Manoj's style is sweeping, apparently academic, but has a quick sense of narration, and his pieces provide the readers with a pleasant taste of things far-off and beyond his ken. Both Nilamoni and Manoj were competent writers, and their essays were distinguished not so much for the quality of argument or intelligence, but for emotional involvement and quality of vision and insight which they could communicate to the reader with wit, humour, and at times, with a pinch of irony. Thus this is how Nilamoni speaks of berries that he once found being sold by a 'toothless' old woman on the side of a road - "I am unhappy that all these berries, flowers, roots and lettuce are quickly forgotten. No more the villages are shady. No more the groves of trees, the crowds of flowers, and thick, dense bushes around the villages provide cool, kind comfort. No more a child can roam around the villages and discover flowers, fruits, berries and birds to his great delight. The new civilization has

taken its toll, the villages are bare, naked. The flowers, trees, birds all gone. The old woman took me back to a world lost forever." And this is how Manoj speaks of Indianness- "But the point is as you cannot explain 'truth' or 'Brahma' through talks, similarly you cannot do that with 'Indianness'. Not only that, there is a positive danger in trying to explain it. Spiritualness is the container of Indian culture. The ultimate truth lies hidden in man's consciousness. It is only through eagerness that one can discover it. The Vedas and the Upanishads convey this and this provides the skeleton to Indian thought." Their books include respectively by Nilamoni and Manoj, such well-known ones as *Debadasara Drustipata* (As Devadas Sees, in two parts, 1986 and 1988), and *Kete Diganta* (Many Horizons, in two parts, 1986).

The emotion as an important component of the total structure has been the hall-mark of Chandrasekhar Rath's pieces which have a flowing, rhetorical style, and are mostly concerned with cultural matrix. His essays, almost at times like extended poetry, remind distantly Charles Lamb, and are noted on the one hand for a strong, personal voice, and on the other, for their tendency towards a subtle spiritualism. Some of his more important books are, *Drusti O Darsan* (The Vision and a Philosophy, 1971), *Mana Aranya* (The Mind, a Forest, 1980), *Asruta Swara* (The Unheard Voice, 1989) and *Ratha Saptaka* (Rath Seven, 1992). Bhubaneswar Behera, an academician and senior engineer, in his essays combined an impersonal rational structure with the pleasant, personal style of a belles-lettrist, almost always with a witty, sharp point of view. His well-known books are, *Suna Parikhya* (Oh, Parikhya, Listen, 1976) and *Sahabasthan* (Coexistence, 1979).

Binod Kanungo, Baidyanath Mishra, Radhanath Rath, Basudev Sahoo and Sarat Kumar Mohanty, all wrote in felicitious style, but rearely deviated to belles-lettristic design or any personal style, neither towards much of emotional communication. They took recourse to rational, argumentative structure, and aimed at

elaborating their view points, and putting across their contents to the readers as directly and clearly as much as possible. For example Binod Kanungo's essays had their own specific uniqueness in the sense that they were written mostly on abstract topics, like 'idleness', 'foolishness', 'greed' etc., in highly compact forms. The essays were included in his Oriya Encyclopaedia *Jnan Mandal* and were sharp, pithy and intelligent pieces. Baidyanath Mishra, mostly wrote on such social and socio-political factors that hinged on economics and economic condition of the country as well as on the components of a welfare state. His style was easy, flexible and explanatory. Some of his well-known books are, *Samajika Abastha O Arthanaitika Pragati* (Social Conditions and Economic Development, 1954), *Bharatara Arthanaitika Samasya* (Economic Condition of India) and *Adhunik Savyatara Jantrana* (The Agony of the Modern Civilization, 1995). Radhanath Rath, wrote on psychological impact on modern man, as well as on various socio-cultural factors that shaped and influenced modern ways of life. His style was analytical and expansive and his point of view was often sharp and aggressive. His books include, *Pragati* (Progress), *Itihasare Prativasali Byaktira Sthana* (The Place of Influential People in History), both published in early fifties, and *Agradrusti* (Forward Vision, 1996). Basudev Sahoo, poet, novelist, story-writer wrote on social, socio-literary and socio-economic aspects of contemporary times and combined an academician's scholarship with a writer's creative imagination and sharp sensibility. His books are many, some of which to be noted are, *Samaja O Samhati* (Society and Cohesiveness). *Sahitya O Samajbada* (Literature and Socialism, 1988,), *Sahitya Samaja O Arthaniti* (Literature, Society and Economics, 2000), *Nana Rupe Nari* (Women in Many Forms, 2003) and *Samaja O Jibana* (Society and Life, 2005). Sarat Kumar Mohanty, trained as a mathmatician, wrote on various aspects of science, on the development of civilization and on changes in culture. He has been deeply conscious of the erosion of values

and displacement of sensibility that have taken place in the context of modern living. His style of writing is easy, without embellishment, and aims at putting across mostly information to his readers. His well-known book is *Sanskruti Apasanskruti* (Culture Counter Culture, 1984).

Manmohan Chaudhury and Kisan Pattanaik did not write as frequently as others wrote. They had only two books each to their credit, the books being *Hata Bajarara Brahmajnan* (The Wisdom of the Market Place, 1981) and *Arthanitira Golakdhanda* (The Labyrinth of Economics,1998), by Chaudhury, and *Bharatiya Buddhijibira Sankat O Anyanya Prabandha* (The Crisis of Indian Intellectual and Other Essays, 2001) and *Bicharar Tipakhata* (The Note Book of Deliberations, 2004) by Pattanaik. Though both began essay-writing little late, particularly Pattanaik very late as related to Oriya (he wrote in Hindi earlier), in late nineties, yet whatever they wrote, were sharp, extremely intelligent, and deeply insightful deliberations on factors of contemporary existence - social, socio-cultural, socio-political and even political ones, that ranked with the best of Chittaranjan's pieces and among the finest essays written in Oriya literature as a whole. Both Chaudhury and Pattanaik were eminent social activists and politicians who shunned power and position and devoted their lives to resist the misuse of both by powers that be. Their writings were intimately linked with their lives, carried similar and complete conviction, established new and fresh points of view on matters of routine habits, thoughts and conditions of living, and on the whole, advanced perceptions and deliberations at a high level of creativity. It would be apt to have a few examples from both. Thus, this is how Chaudhury speaks on 'equality'- "In the victory-cry of capitalism, it seems all ideals related to equality, amity and co-operation are going to be pushed down. But whatever is truth is bound to remain so and come out ultimately as victorious, in spite of the loudest denial of the same. Equality has remained as the basic trend of human society

from its beginning. Wherever inequality in society has raised its head man's conscience and intelligence have gone on resisting it. A number of great men, saints, revolutionaries have continued to raise the banner of equality. The existence of mankind and of human civilization depends on the perception of equality. If today's world-economy that relentlessly exploits man and nature, continues to do so for a long time, then there is a stark possibility that not only man but all creatures will die out from this earth." *(Arthanitira Golakdhanda,* P.29). Differently, Pattanaik speaks of Indian intellectuals - "Many things have been said about the weakness of Indian intellectuals. In one opinion he is a rootless personality. He has not grown in the tradition of this country neither the air nor the earth of this country have contributed to his growth. In another opinion he has a divided personality, he is pressed in the strain of valuation between the ancient and the western cultures. In yet another opinion, because he is not ready to accept the world culture (that is, the Western culture) completely, he fails to develop... All these go to prove that the condition of Indian intellectual is not satisfactory. But these are not the causes of his distress, these are only symptoms. At the root of all that, the two basic reasons for his flaws and weaknesses are related to his character and ideals. Character here means the faith and creed of the intellectual. Whatever he may be, whether an artist, a writer, or an economist, he should have dedication for his work, without which he cannot gracefully discharge his duty. As an intellectual he should establish his own independence and pride. That should be the first step for him. (*Bharatiya Budhijibira Sankata O Anyanya Prabandha.* p.4).

New Flowering : Autobiography and Biography

The history of Oriya autobiography is not a long one. It emerged as a serious and developed form only after Independence, though the first Oriya autobiography, a remarkable creative work, was *Atmajiban Charita* by Phakirmohan Senapati, written in the

beginning of the 20th century. It was a wonderful documentation of the times, and an excellent creative exposition of the writer. Thus the model created by Phakirmohan single-handedly, was taken up as a serious pursuit only after Independence, when writers as well as people from other professions, such as politicians, administrators, academicians, lawyers and social activists etc., as if vied with each other to set down their experiences, and wrote in styles appropriate to themselves. By a rough count, in the decades after Independence, in a period of about 50, 55 years, there would be about 100 autobiographies, many of which acquired good deal of popularity and eminence. On the one hand, as a whole, they provided an excellent documentation of Oriya life and society almost from the beginning of the 20th century, and on the other, they offered frank and open points of view on contemporary situations.

Thus, first of all, there are writers, both senior and comparatively junior, whose autobiographies provide not only interesting insights into their creative careers, but are also fine documents of the times they have lived through their social and familial relationships. Their points of views could be seen on very many matters they have been associated with, and on the whole, with their joys and agonies in contemplating on life's impact and tensions. At the same time what can be noted in them is a creative joy in looking at one's own life objectively. Such writers are, to list more important ones, Nilakantha Das (*Atmajibani,* Autobiography, 1963), Godabaris Mishra, *Ardha Satabdhira Odisa O Tahinre Mo Sthana,* (The Half Century Orissa and My Place Therein, 1958), Kalicharan Pattanaik (*Kumvara Chaka,* The Potter's Wheel, 1975), Kalindi Charan Panigrahi (*Ange Jaha Niveichhi,* Whatever Experienced in Life, 1978), Sm. Sita Devi Khadanga (*Mora Jiban Smruti,* The Memories Of My Life, 1978), Satchidananda (Sachi) Rautray (*Uttara Kakhya,* The North Orbit, 1998), Gopinath Mohanty (*Srotaswoti,* The Flowing Stream, 1992),

Kunjabehari Dash *(Mo Kahani,* My Story, 1976), Phaturananda (*Mo Phuta Dangara Kahani,* (The Story of my Leaking Boat, 1989), Manoranjan Das (*Smruti Samlap*, Dialogues from Memory, 1999), Chittaranjan Das (*Mitrasya Chakhusya,* In the Eyes of a Friend, 1993), Surendra Mohanty (*Patha O Pruthibi,* The Passage and the World, 1986), Kishori Charan Das (*Samaya Nahin*, Time is Over, 2004), Dayalal Joshi (*Jibanara Dhara,* The Channels of Life, 2001), Satkadi Hota (*Mo Samaya,* My Time, 1998), Rabi Singh (*Nisanga Padatika,* The Lonely Footman), Monoj Das (*Samudra Kulara Eka Grama,* A Village on the Sea-Shore, 1996), and Ganeswar Mishra (*Nija Thikana,* One's Own Address, 2001)

Secondly, the academicians and teachers who have differently made mark in their careers, and have written with subjective involvement as well as with objective distance. They are Pranakrushna Parija (1891-1998, *Akinchanara Jibana Smruti,* The Memoirs of an Insignificant Man), Satyanarayan Rajguru (1904-2000, *Mo Jibana Sangram,* The Waves of my Life, 1994), Ramkrushna Nanda (1906-1994, *Jibana Taranga,* The Struggles of Life, 1969/1989), Krushna Chandra Panigrahi (1909-1969, *Mo Samayara Odisa,* Orissa of my Times. 1978), Krushna Chandra Tripathy (1911-1989, *Niraba Kabitie,* The Silent Poet, 1987), Bhubaneswar Behera (*Ganra Daka,* The Call of the Village, 1993), Sriram Chandra Das (1918-1994, *Mo Akuha Kahani,* My Untold Story, 1992), Radhanath Rath (Prof., *Mo Swapna Mo Jibana,* My Dreams and My Life, 1989), Manmath Nath Das (b.1926, *Jibanara Patha Prante Digantara Drusya.* The Views of the Horizon on the Life's Ways, 1996) and Hrudananda Ray (b.1930, *Jane Anubhabi Anubhabara,* The Experiences of an Experienced Man, 2002), and *Manepade* (Comes to Mind, 2005) by Ganeswar Das.

Thirdly, the politicians and the political leaders, who provide interesting sidelights on their political activities. They are, Harekrushna Mahatab (*Sadhanar Pathe,* Towards Achivement, 1948/1987), Pabitra Mohan Pradhan (1910-1988, *Muktipathe*

Sainika. The Soldier on Way to Freedom, 1949), Surendra Nath Dwibedy (1913-2003, *Mo Jiban Sangram*, The Struggles of My Life, 1984), Sradhakar Supakar (1914-1993), *Madhyam Purusa,* The Middle Man, 1982), Nilamoni Rautray (1920-2004, *Smruti Anubhuti,* Memories and Experiences, 1968), Banka Behari Das (*Sangramar Sesha Nahin,* No End to Struggles, 1998) and Rabi Roy (b.1925 *Anewsar Akasha,* The Sky of Learning, 2005).

Fourthly, the freedom-fighters and social activists, whose autobiographies communicate a voice of complete conviction and sincerity, an attitude of nonconformism and resistance to aspects of inequality and discrimination, and a great concern for the discomfort and plight of people they live with and work for. At the same time, all the people in this category, particularly the freedom-fighters, exhibit great respect for Gandhiji and a pride in all the activities they were engaged in. They are, Nanda Kishor Das (1894-1986, *Mo Jiban O Janjalara Kahani,* The Story of My Life and Tribulations, 1982), Sm. Rama Devi (1899-1985, *Jibana Pathe,* On the Life's Way, 1984), Alekh Prasad Das (1902-2001, *Jibanara Daka*, The Call of Life, 1994), Narayana Birabar Samant (1900-1999, *Jibana Smruti,* The Memories of Life), Udyanath Sarangi (1905-1999, *Gandhi Maharajanka Shisya,* The Disciple of Gandhi the Great King, 1981), Binod Kanungo (*Runa Parisodha,* Paying the Debts, 1983), Brajakishor Dhal (*Bhulibu Nahin,* We Can't Forget, 1980), Manmohan Chaudhury *(Kasturi Mruga Sama* Like a Musk-Deer, 1995) and Sm. Annapurna Maharana (b.1917, *Amruta Anubhav* Experiencing Immortality, 2005).

Fifthly, the administrators and the lawyers, whose autobiographies are not so much the accounts of administration or legal profession, as how these professions had their impact on responsive, sensitive minds - accounts of experiences that shape the attitudes and mental perspective. The administrators are, Bharat Chandra Nayak (1887-1969, *Mora Purba Smruti Katha,* The

Account of my Earlier Memories, 1966) who gives a felicitous account of his experience as an administrator in Bihar and Orissa before Independence, Nilamoni Senapati (1898-1984, *Mo Kahani,* My Story), a very senior bureaucrat of Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.), Gananath Das (1913-2001, *Sekala Ekala,* That Time This Time, 2000), also a senior bureaucrat (I.A.S.) who gives charming accounts of his early years in the Service, and even before he joined the Service; and Sarat Chandra Mishra (b.1936, *Jibanara Pathaprante,* In the Ways and By Ways of Life, 2000) who provides his varied experiences with remarkable ease and felicity, both inside India and abroad as a senior member of Indian Police Service. Similarly among lawyers, we have three very senior well-known and much-respected lawyers of Orissa High Court. They are Rajkishor Das, Harihar Mahapatra (1904-1994) and Gangadhar Rath, and their books are, respectively, *Anekdinara Aneka Katha* (A Good Number of Tales of Good Number of Days, 1990), *Jibana O Jibika* (Life and Profession, 1987) and *Bhulinahin* (Not Forgotten, 1995). Das, Mahapatra, and Rath have written with insight and intelligence, and convey a fine apprehension and discipline of a lawyer's mind to the reader - an exciting and fresh dimension in Oriya autobiography.

Finally, we like to note very pleasant autobiographies of a few individuals - a journalist, a linguist, a musician, and an artist. They are respectively Chintamoni Mishra (1907-1998), Debi Prasanna Pattanaik (b.1931), Akhaya Mohanty (1937-2002) and Dinanath Pathy (b.1942). Mishra who was a well-known editor of journals and a respected journalist, gives a graphic account of Orissa before and after Independence in his book *Ardha Satabdhira Anubhuti* (The Experiences of Half a Century, 1983). Pattanaik, an internationally known linguist, speaks of his experiences related to language and language development in India, particularly as the Director of Central Institute of Indian Languages, in a racy style, in his book *Aneka Jibana* (Many Lives, 2004) which also

includes an autobiographical account of his late father, Madhusudan Pattanaik, who was a well-known freedom-fighter. Akhaya Mohanty, a famous musician and songster of Orissa who died untimely, and that puts a deep, poignant note to his autobiography, narrates in a poetic, personal style about his own growth into music and literature, and his many personal relationships there to. The book is *Aryadasara Atmalipi* (The Self-Portrait of Aryadas, 2002). Pathy is an internationally known artist and writer, and is specially concerned in exploring the subtle relationship between art and literature. His three autobiographical books, entitled, *Digapahandira Drawing Mastra* (The Drawing Teacher of Digapahandi, 1990), *Punjikayar Fakir* (The Mendicant of Punjikaya, 2004) and *Chilika Panira Chhai* (Shadow on the Waters of Chilika, 2005), three volumes of a projected four-volume autobiographical account, detail his own entry, growth and settlement in the world of art and painting, along with references to his own father, who was involved in the environment of art, and also to his singularly devoted art-teacher. The trilogy, as it is now, is an excellent account of an artist's insight and perception - a singularly fine and exciting work.

In this connection, probably, it would be apt to repeat references as a whole, to three remarkable autobiographies written during the period - three uniquely creative work. They are, Kalicharan Pattanaik's *Kumvara Chaka,* Gopinath Mohanty's *Srotaswoti* published in three parts, and Manoranjan Das's *Smruti Samlap.* Kalicharan was a famous theatre-organizer and dramatist, and *Kumvara Chaka* is a graphic account how he emerged as a highly successful dramatist and drama-organizer. The account has a racy flow of events, has an intense emotional environment, and projects the writer's complete inwardness with his creative mind. It is a document, a testament, and an analysis of existence, and in a language, highly poetic and personal, in short, a very substantial creative work. *Srotaswoti* is an excellent creative work too. In

about 1100 pages it is a racy account of Gopinath Mohanty's life beginning from his birth till a part of his service career - a personal account of pain and pleasure, of relationship, of expanding mind and understanding, a steady growth of insight into factors of life, and a rise in the powers of creativity in the context of existence. It reads like a fiction - a superb linguistic organization of a superb writer. To have something uniquely creative is also seen in *Smruti Samlap.* It is quite long, about 650 pages, and first of all, an exciting account of Manoranjan's development as a dramatist in consonant with the changing taste of the time, and secondly, a comprehensive account of Oriya dramatic growth in a period about 40 years after Independence, and Manoranjan's complete involvement with all that. At the same time as in two earlier autobiographies, here too, it is an intense analysis of contemporary life and existence, and the writer's role in it. In *Kumvara Chaka* the structural attitude is inward, in *Srotaswoti* it is towards an expansion of imagination, in *Smruti Samlap* on the other hand, it is a steadiness, a desire to fix the goal and organize the mental responses to reach that. The history of Oriya autobiography is not long. But in this not too long perspective *Kumvara Chaka, Srotaswoti,* and *Smruti Samlap,* along with Phakirmohan Senapati's *Atmajiban Charita,* published much earlier before Independence, are like bright stars, and are extremely valuable in the total assessment of the tradition and expansion of autobiography as a whole.

The related genre, that is, biography, is not that much developed in Oriya as autobiography has been. Yet in the post-Independence period a good number of biographies have been written, of slender and medium length, on varieties of persons and personalities from different areas of life, beginning from political leaders and writers to social activists and socially important persons. But on the whole they are of routine type, that are meant to record details of information and convey the person's stature

and standing. But even then some books may be singled out as being better than the rest, and as good and competent biographies. Initially we may note one by Gopinath Mohanty, *Dhuli Matira Santha* (A Saint of Dust and Earth, 1985) on late Gopabandhu Chaudhury, a famous freedom-fighter, Gandhiite, and Congress leader before Independence. The other is by Surendra Mohanty, in two parts, in about 1000 pages. One is *Satabdhira Surya* (The Sun of the Century, 1970) and the other *Kulabruddha* (The Elder of the Clan, 1978), both highly readable fictional biography of late Madhusudan Das, the great leader. Both the parts constitute a fine creative achievement and establish Madhusudan as a man who suffered immensely through adverse situations only to rise triumphantly at the end to become the saviour of the nation.

Apart from Gopinath Mohanty's and Surendra Mohanty's books we may note some other biographies, well-written and well documented, for our record and reference. These are, first, Pandit Suryanarayan Das's two books one each, on Madhusudan Das and Gopabandhu Das. Suryanarayan (1907-1982) was a prolific writer, and his two biographies on two illustrious persons are written competently with a good deal of attention to details and data. The other books are, *Satabdhi Purusha* (The Man of the Century, 1991), a massive book on Gaurisankar Roy, the famous editor of *Utkal Dipika,* by Suvendra Mohan Srichandan Singh; *Grasta Surya* (The Eclipsed Sun, 2004) on Dayanidhi Mishra freedom-fighter and eminent writer from Western Orissa, by his son and daughter-in-law, Amulya Krushna Mishra and Sm. Sailabala Mishra; *He Sathi He Sarathi* (Oh, Friend and Charioteer, 1969, Revised Second Edition 1977) on Gopabandhu Das by Nityanand Satpathy; also two other books on Gopabandhu, *Gopabandhu Dash* (Gopabandhu Das, 1994) by Sriṛam Chandra Das, and *Odisara Adhunika Rajnitira Pratisthata Gopabandhu* (Gopabandhu, the Founder of Modern Politics in Orissa, 2000) by Dinabandhu Mishra; *Alok O*

Amrutara Kabi Gangadhar (Gangadhar, the Poet of Light and Nectar, 1994) on Gangadhar Meher, poet, by Manindra Kumar Meher, the great grandson of the poet; *Govinda Tripathinka Jibani* (The Biography of Govind Tripathy, 2002) on Govind Tripathy, the essayist and novelist, by his son Biswakesh Tripathy; *Bagmi Biswanath* (Biswanath, the Orator, 1983), on Biswanath Kar, the famous editor of *Utkal Sahitya,* by Krushna Chandra Kar; *Mahiyasi Mahila Sarala* (Sarala, the Noble Lady, 1995) on Sarala Devi eminent essayist, social activist, freedom-fighter, and the first woman-leader of Orissa Congress, by V. Rajendra Raju; *Malati Devi : Chaudati Chitrapata* (Malati Devi, 14 Portraits, 1989) on Sm. Malati Devi (1904-2002), eminent social activist, freedom-fighter, Congress leader, and wife of Nabakrushna Choudhury, edited by Sailaja Rabi; *Sri Naba Krushna Chaudhury Eka Jibani* (Sri Nabakrushna Choudhury, a Biography, 1992) on Nabakrushna Chaudhury (1901-1984), eminent freedom-fighter, Congress leader and Chief Minister of Orissa (1950-1956) and brother of Gopabandhu Choudhury, by Chittaranjan Das; as also two other books on him, *Biplabi Jananayak Nabakrushna Chaudhury* (Nabakrushna Chaudhury, the Revolutionary Leader of People, 1994) by Balaram Mohanty, and *Anirbarna : Nabakrushna Chaudhurinka Jiban O Samaya* (Unputtable Flame: The Life and Times of Nabakrushna Chaudhury, 1996;) by Padma Charan Nayak; *Itihasara Hajila Khia* (The Lost Thread of History, 2003), on Bansidhar Mishra alias Surat Alli (1901-1988), freedom-fighter, and famous labour-leader in England for 24 years, a powerful internationally known revolutionary who was later forgotten by his own people, by his daughter Sm. Sanghamitra Mishra; and *Utkal Sangita Gaurab Balakrushna Das* (Balakrushna Das, the Glory of Orissa's Music, 1994) on Balakrushna Das (1923-1993), the famous musician and Guru of Odissi music, by Suresh Chandra Dey, his disciple, and Vice-President of Balakrushna Das Foundation, Finally, we like to note four books by Bishnu Charan

Mohanty, a writer and a retired administrator, who has written extensively on a number of outstanding people from various walks of life, with many of whom he came in personal contact. The portraits are done with sympathy, understanding and a good deal of felicity. The books are, *Romanthana Eka Byartha Atitara* (Chewing Once Again a Failed Past, 1989), *Parala Prativa* (The Talents of Parla, 1991), *Utkal Milanar Bismruta Nabaratna* (The Nine Jewels of Orissa's Union, 2000) and *Sekala O Tapare* (That Time and Afterwards, 2001).

New Flowering : Literary Criticism

Literary criticism in the post-Independence Oriya literature has a peculiar existence. Criticism as such has never been a strong tradition in Oriya literature before, where scholars used to be engaged full-time in critical assessment and critical pursuit. The one person we can think of that way before Independence, was Gopinath Nanda who made a comparative critical study of Sarala's *Mahabharat*. The situation was much changed after Independence, when a large number of colleges got opened, and larger emphasis was put on studies of Oriya literature and language, and larger number of scholars got interested in critical pursuit as such, and a tradition of critical assessment started to grow as such from early fifties onwards. This related to studies of modern Oriya literature, beginning from Radhanath Roy and Phakirmohan Senapati till Independence, and even ancient and medieval Oriya literature, including such authors as Sarala, Balaram, Upendra and Dinakrushna etc. Subsequently, post-Independence literature also came within its ambit, and studies were undertaken on post-Independence genres and authors. Yet, peculiarly, the studies have not taken any meaningful direction, nor much of fruitful critical insight has been established. The field has largely remained flexible and the critical assessment has not achieved sufficient equipment for study and evaluation. Therefore Oriya literary criticism today,

on the one hand, can boast of a good production, but on the other, it is not equipped that much to promote proper critical insight, understanding and exposition.

Initially, we may refer to some competent critics whose serious, purposive work provided necessary direction and laid the foundation for the critical tradition to grow, and secondly, to such critics whose involvement in particular genres or areas opened up vistas for others to work for. First, mention may be made of Bansidhar Mohanty (1924-1990) and Krushna Charan Sahoo (1929- 1997), both Professors of Oriya in Utkal University, Bhubaneswar, who did pioneering work related to ancient and medieval Oriyal literature. Bansidhar projected a History of Oriya Literature of which he completed three volumes, and covered a period of about 300 years, from the 14th till 16th century, from pre-Sarala times through Sarala, to Panchasakha literature. He wrote competently, in detail, and unearthed many new facts for the interested scholars to take up and pursue. His books were *Odia Sahityara Itihasa,* in three parts (History of Oriya Literature, Volumes:- I, II, III, 1970, 1973, 1977), and *Odisara Natha Sampradaya O Natha Sahitya* (Natha Literature and Natha Community in Orissa, 1968). Sahoo also did the same, but he put in more details and greater range, and extended his studies beyond 16th century to come over to the 17th and the 18th. His three important books were, *Prachina Sahitya* (Ancient Literature, 1978), *Madhyakalin Sahitya* (Medieval Literature, 1983) and *Kahe Krushna Das Kabi* (Thus Says Krushna Das Poet, 1976), a detail critical analysis of *Rasakallol* of Dinakrushna Das. Sahoo too, wrote on Upendra Bhanj, Avimanyu etc., but his most important studies were on Balaram Das and Oriya Ramayana. Sahoo's greatest contribution to Oriya literature was in text-editing. He edited Balaram's *Jagamohan Ramayana*, Jagannath's *Srimad Bhagabat*, Achyutananda's *Harivansa* and Sarala's *Mahabharat* (partly), all from palm-leaf sources, and prepared the authoritative

editions - an incredible and stupendous task, done single-handedly by him, in a period of about 30 years, which put the foundation of Oriya literature on an absolutely firm footing. Sahoo also text-edited, again from palm-leaf sources, a number of important ancient texts, such as *Chandi Purana* of Sarala Das, massive *Nrusingha Purana* by Pitambar Das (18th century) *Rudra Sudhanidhi* of Narayananda Abadhuta Swamy, *Parimala Kavya* of Nrusingha Sena, and 14th century semi-religious text *Sishuveda.* Sahoo's knowledge of ancient texts and authors, and his critical insight as well as ways of exposition were superb, and have been rarely matched by any other critic so far. Most of his critical pieces, including long Introductions to edited texts, have been collected together in 7 volumes so far, entitled *Professor Krushna Charan Sahoo Rachana Sambhara* (The Collected Works of Professor Krusnha Charan Sahoo, 1998-2004).

Besides the above, we may also note the work of three more senior critics, all academicians. First, Natabar Samantray (1918-2000), a substantial critic, whose critical discussions, related to early writers of modern Oriya literature, such as Radhanath, Phakirmohan, Gangadhar, Nandakishor etc. as well as on ancient authors such as Upendra Bhanj, Avimanyu etc. published in the fifties and early sixties, broke new grounds and created a stir in critical studies. His most important work *Odia Sahityara Itihasa 1803-1920* (History of Oriya Literature, 1803-1920, 1964) was a pioneering study based on extensive research, a mine of information by itself about a largely unexplored period till then, that not only highlighted the context and achievement of authors in the beginning period of modern Oriya literature, but also remained as a potential source for subsequent critics to work upon. Samantray, it may be pointed out, established the norms of study for early important authors of the modern period for many years to come. Secondly, Janakiballav Mohanty (1925-1999), another substantial critic, who wrote extensively on ancient and modern

authors, and broke new grounds in the study of Oriya songs and lyrics. He collected and edited the first-ever anthology of Oriya lyrics, *Odia Geeti Kavya Samkalana,* (Anthology of Oriya Lyrics, 1977) wherein he collected about 800 songs and lyrics of about 150 poets from 1550 to 1900. He accompanied it with a comprehensive critical discussion, entitled *Odia Geeti Kavya* (Oriya Lyrical Songs, 1966). Both the collection and the critical assessment constituted a pioneering work in Oriya literature. He has other books too, done in assessment of ancient and modern authors, two well-known books being *Prachina Geeti Kabi O Kabyadhara* (Ancient Lyric Poets and Trends of Poetry, 1980), and *Bahu Barnara Odia Sahitya* (Multi-Coloured Oriya Literature 1997). Mohanty's discussions convey information and assessment and are examples of fine critical intelligence. The next critic to be mentioned is Chintamoni Behera (1928-2005). He did not do any pioneering work like Samantray and Mohanty, but his critical essays show an alert sensitive mind and convey competence and intelligence. His books include *Kabya O Kalakar* (Poetry and Artist, 1965), *Bidagdha Pathak* (Cultured Reader, 1975) and *Kala Drusti* (The Vision of Art, 1982) etc., which show his good range and ability of discrimination.

The richness of post-Independence Oriya poetry provided opportunity to many critics to undertake critical analysis and assessment. The work of two such critics in this connection may be noted. One is Nityanand Satpathy (b.1937), also a Professor of Oriya in Utkal University, who edited a quarterly journal *Isttahar* for many years, devoted to post-Independence Oriya literature, particularly poetry. Satpathy, through his journal, as also elsewhere, highlighted many emerging poets and made assessments of their poetry, and created a congenial field for both. His books to that effect include *Sabujaru Sampratika* (From the Greens to the Contemporary, 1979), and *Saturiru Sahasrabdi* (From 70s to Millennium, 2003), The other person is the present writer, whose

book of criticism, *Suryasnat* (Sun-Drenched, 1999), a collection of 22 essays, mostly on post-Independence Oriya poetry, highlighting such poets as Sachi Rautray, Guruprasad Mohanty, Ramakant Rath and Sitakant Mahapatra, received national recognition (Sahitya Akademi Award, 2003). His method is analytical, close study of the text and perspective assessment.

Additionally, the work of three more critics may be noted. They are all academicians, the senior-most being Srinibas Mishra (b.1927). The other two are, Hemant Kumar Das (b.1937) and Debendra Kumar Das (b.1954). Each of these critics specialized in a specific area and did creditable work in that. Thus, Prof. Mishra worked in the area of Oriya prose, particularly as it developed between 1811 and 1920, a remote and very interesting period, that involved quite a good number of established writers on whom not much work had been done before that. Mishra's book *Adhunika Odia Gadya Sahitya* (Modern Oriya Prose Literature, 1978) was a pioneering work that influenced and inspired many subsequent researchers. Similarly Hemanta's work on Oriya drama has been a work of dedication and scholarship - a very pioneering achievement. The development of Oriya drama beginning from the later 19th century till the end of the 20th, has been a multifaceted one, and Hemant's critical surveys and assessment are marked with intelligence and expertise. He has got a number of books related to Oriya drama, of which special mention may be made of his 4-volume History of Oriya Drama, entitled *Odia Natakara Bikasa Dhara* (The Developments and Trends of Oriya Drama) published volume-wise respectively in 1976, 1980, 1983 and 1988, on the whole a comprehensive work of much value and utility. Debendra writes perceptive essays on modern authors, but his speciality lies in text-editing and preparing error-free authentic texts of such authors, a work at par with such editing done by Krushna Charan Sahoo earlier for ancient and medieval authors. In this Debendra's work is unique and has opened up new and

newer aspects of well-known authors that had lay hidden under incorrect texts. His work in this connection related to Phakirmohan Senapati, Radhanath Roy, Gangadhar Meher and Nandkishor Bal etc., and placing the authors appropriately in sociological and socio-literary context, is fresh, exciting and highly commendable.

We may maintain that the post-Independence Oriya literary criticism suffers from a contradiction. In spite of a much larger expansion in comparison to pre-Independence days, when the number of critics and publication of critical books have much increased, there has not been much gain in matters of perception, insight and assessment. Yet, the fact that literary criticism as such draws many minds, and unearths almost regularly, many details about the authors, their work and about Oriya literature in general, is by itself a proof of its vivacity and livingness, and to that extent goes to become a substantial part of the totality of post-Independence Oriya literature. At the end, in addition to the critics as above, we like to note selectively the names of some other critics who have in general earned readers' recognition and respect. They are, Pandit Suryanarayan Das who wrote a multi-volume History of Oriya Literature entitled *Odia Sahityara Itihasa* and catalogued the authors and their works in detail; Krushna Chandra Panigrahi, who made an exciting historical interpretation of Sarala's *Mahabharat;* Sarbeswar Das (1918-1997) who wrote perceptibly on Sarala Das, Jagannath Das, Achyutananda Das etc.; Surendra Mohanty, novelist, who wrote on Phakirmohan Senapati, and also a multi-volume History of Oriya Literature from a sociological point of view entitled *Odia Sahityara Kramavikas;* Benudhar Rout who broke new grounds in his discussions on Radhanath Roy; Gangadhar Bal (b.1927) who wrote extensively on Gopalkrushna; Pathani Pattanaik (b.1928) who wrote a one-volume felicitous History of Oriya Literature (*Odia Sahityara Itihasa*); Sachidananda Mishra (b.1930) wrote intelligent investigative essays on Upendra Bhanj and Kabisurya Baladev Rath; Debi Prasanna Pattanaik,

linguist, who collected and commented with a good critical competence on the correspondence between Radhanath Roy and Gangadhar Meher - a pioneering critical activity; Krushna Charan Behera (b.1931) who did exploratory work on early Oriya novels; Khageswar Mahapatra (b.1933) who did pioneering work exploring the link between language and literature; Sarat Chandra Pradhan, poet, who did perceptive studies on modern authors; Dasarathi Das (b.1936) who wrote extensively on modern Oriya authors, particularly on post-Independence Oriya poetry; Baishnab Charan Samal (b. 1939) who specialized on Oriya short story and wrote extensively about that; Brundaban Chandra Acharya (1937-1999) who wrote a one-volume well-organized history of Oriya literature, as also a good, exploratory book on the Satyabadi writers; Nagendranath Pradhan (b.1937), who wrote knowledgeably on pre-Sarala socio-religious situations; Saurindra Barik, poet, who wrote on a variety of topics with a good deal of perception, and almost always with a comparative point of view; Basudev Sahu (Prof. Oriya, 1939-2005) who extensively explored the influence of Lord Jagannath on Oriya literature; Sudarsan Acharya (b.1939) and Dukhisyam Pattanaik (b.1940) who wrote knowledgeably and competently on the deep links between Oriya and Sanskrit; Asutosh Pattanaik (b.1940) who wrote on ancient literature, particularly on Avimanyu Samantsinghar; Gaganendranath Das (b.1940), linguist, who studied Oriya literature from linguistic point of view; Govinda Chandra Udgata (1920-1999) who wrote scholarly eassys on Sanskrit poetics and on the poetry of Gangadhar Meher; and Ratnakar Chaini (b.1945) who devoted long years of study on Achyutananda Das, and edited his poetry in multiple volumes. Similar work was done by Sricharan Mohanty (b.1953) on Mayadhar Mansingh. Asit Kabi (1935-1999) specialized in criticism and wrote the first history of Oriya literary criticism. Niladri Bhusan Harichandan (b.1946) specialized on drama and wrote a number of books on drama, both in Oriya and English.

Natabar Satpathy (b.1948) wrote on Oriya Puranas and compiled the first-ever concordance of Sarala's *Mahabharat.*

In this connection it would be appropriate to note the names of three senior Professors of Oriya, Adikand Sahu (b.1946), Bauribandhu Kar (b.1953) and Sm. Sanghamitra Mishra (b. 1953) of three major Universities of Orissa, Sambalpur, Berhampur and Utkal respectively. They as well as other members of their Departments are all engaged in serious critical pursuits in guiding and conducting research work in their own Universities. Sahu specializes in comparative literature, Kar in Oriya prose and essay, and Sm. Mishra in drama. At the end, the excellent work done by a non-academician is to be noted. He is Surendra Kumar Maharana (b.1947). Maharana has written a scholarly book in English entitled *Tantric Buddhism in Orissa.* In addition, he has written a large number of critical books in Oriya, related mostly to ancient authors, books and movements. But his most important work is a comprehensive critical documentation of Oriya authors from the ancient times till today - an almost unique work in the area. The book is entitled *Odia Sahityara Itihasa* (History of Oriya literature, 2001).

New Flowering : Travelogue

Travelogues in the post-Independence Oriya literature, and even for that, in the pre-Independence days had a feeble existence. It is not that the Oriyas do not travel. In the recent years particularly, they have been travelling very widely. But somehow this experience of moving out has not been adequately reflected in literature. Interestingly, the travel-books that we come across are mostly travel-accounts of two countries, U.S.A. and England, though there are also travel accounts of places inside India. The accounts have mainly two aspects, first, an account by itself, that is, a detail narration of the place or land visited and the narrator's routine involvement in all that. Secondly, it is the desire to pass on

information about the land visited, and if necessary, to make a comparative statement of one's own area with the foreign land. But at times, a third aspect also emerges, where it goes beyond a routine objective account to subjective involvement of the traveller, and what is highlighted is the depth or intensity of human relationship, and the extent to which the narrator gets involved in that. In such cases the travelogue becomes a creative unit and facts and fiction join together to make it an expanded creative act.

Two good travelogues published in the fifties are Surendra Mohanty's *Peking Diary* (1959) and Golak Behari Dhal's (1921-1970) *Amerika Anubhuti* (America Experiences, 1952), Mohanty, while an M.P., went in a delegation to China, and *Peking Diary* was its outcome. Being a novelist, he brings a creative writer's imagination to the account and the result is a good readable travelogue that communes pleasure with information. Dhal went to the States as a student and what he records in his travelogue is his first exciting encounter with America and the range of relationship that he struck. An example - "The family where I was to stay, was in a small town, named Westport, at a diṣtance of 200 miles from our camp. ... I reached at 2 at noon. At the noise of the car, the mother (the lady of the house where I am to stay) came out. She had known me from American Foreign Policy Conference. Therefore there was no need of introducing myself. She took hold of my hands and said, 'You are my son from now onwards. You have a brother called Pat in the house. Your room is ready. Please go to number 3 upstairs. You must be tired. First wash and sleep. There is plenty of time to talk. You must have eaten your lunch on the way. Eat a little if you're hungry'. As if I am her son, gone out on a leave somewhere, now returning home."

Sradhakar Supakar's fine travelogue *Tirthapathe* (On the Way to Pilgrimage) describing his journey to places of pilgrimage inside India, was also published in the fifties (1954). Supakar was an eminent politician and writer, and his account bristles with keen

personal observation, humour, and a great joy in travelling in spite of inconvenient situations. This is how he describes his journey by train to see Kumbha Mela - "A special train has come and stood on the platform for about 10 minutes now. People have already jam-packed it. I am yet far away from the train. At last some of my goodness saved from my previous birth, came to my rescue in the form of a coolie and proposed, 'If you can pay me one rupee, I will somehow let you board the train. I agreed at this cheap proposal. All the doors and windows had been shut from inside in the train compartments. My coolie somehow with difficulty opened a window, raised me like a gunny bag, and pushed me inside the compartment. Head down legs outside the window, I fell on the body of an old man." A little later, in 1962, another good and highly readable travelogue, entitled *Paschima Diganta* (Western Horizon), this time about England, was published. It was by Sriharsa Mishra (1919-1984), an eminent journalist, who had gone to England in a delegation. The account carries the wonder and amazement of the onlooker, the exciting experience of seeing the much-talked of place from close quarters, and conveys all that sensation in ample measure to the reader, Manoj Das, the novelist's book, entitled *Duradurantara* (Far, Far Away, 1976) also carries similar sense of adventure, of seeing new places, making out new friendship and on the whole feeling involved emotionally with the places visited. Thus, this is how he describes his journey through Switzerland - "This time my journey was through more colourful nature, areas given to joyous abandon. Our train was moving at the foot of a great pinnacle of the fearful mountain from whose immense glacier the famous river Rhine had emerged. The train continued to move till the river which appeared like a quiet stream in the beginning, became violent and more violent, till it vanished at a turning. And at places, lonely villages of the valley...".

In the eighties we come across a good number of travelogues. They were, *Deshe Deshe* (Across Countries 1963) by Govind Das; *Bidesare Sahe Dina* (Hundred Days in a Foreign Land, 1985) about America by Laxmidhar Nayak, novelist; *Ajira England and Europe* (Today's England and Europe, 1986), a travel through England and Europe, by Baidyanath Mishra, (Prof. English, b.1923); *Rus Anubhuti* (Russian Experiences, 1982), an account of Russia, by Gopal Chandra Mishra (1925-1990), Professor of Oriya who went on a delegation to Russia; *Mo Bilat Anubhuti* (My Experiences in England, 1983), day to day experiences in England, by Sm.Adarmoni Das (b.1930) where she has settled along with her husband and family; *Kantarbary Kahani* (The Story of Canterbury, 1989), the accounts of Canterbury in England by Ganeswar Mishra who lived in the University of Kent, at Canterbury, for a few years for his studies; and *Patalpurira Halchal* (The Life in the Nether World, 1989), the account of life in a University in the States, by Guruprasad Mohanty (Vet., b.1942) who had gone to live in the concerned University for his studies. The last three authors, that is, Sm. Adarmoni Das, Ganeswar Mishra and Guruprasad Mohanty lived in the places they have written about for much longer periods in comparison to the earlier three writers who had been to their places of visit temporarily for short periods. Specially Sm. Das is permanently settled in England. Therefore their accounts carry much greater understanding and involvement with the manners and living conditions of the people, and they write almost like insiders, with necessary joy and excitement, in a way different from usual travel-accounts. A good example is from Sm. Das's book where she speaks of the coming of spring in England - "After March when the sun's light increases grass grows, gardens look beautiful, and a type of small and big white flowers bloom inside it. They are called 'daisy'. As if the daisies are the eyes of the day. Besides, in addition to daisy, other

types of small flowers, yellow and marginally violet, cover the green grass fields. On the lines of the footpath, on river banks, on both the sides of the train tracks, as well as inside the jungle, wild flowers of different sizes and colour- red, yellow, blue, violet etc. bloom. In some places these beautiful flowers grow so plentifully that one gets the impression as if somebody has arranged them carefully." (p.159). Similarly, Ganeswar Mishra writes of another aspect of British life - "Saturday is completely different from other days at Canterbury. Of course in a week the weekends are two days, Saturday and Sunday. But on Sunday all shops are closed. Therefore in Saturdays the crowds swell in the town's High Street and in parks. At times it becomes difficult to walk in the crowd on the footpaths in the main market street. You don't get the place for car parking in the car-park. The benches in the most beautiful and largest garden, West Gate Park, get filled up by people enjoying their week-ends. On the whole, on Saturdays, an atmosphere of celebration descends on Canterbury. Even though there is no need of shopping lots of people roam around the town just to enjoy the atmosphere." (p.42).

Mention may be made of some other good travelogues published in the nineties and afterwards. They are *Padma Nadira Desha* (The Land of Padma River, 1999) by Surendra Nayak (b.1930), an account of Bangla Desh and a boat-journey on the river Padma, undertaken when the writer was an engineering student in early fifties; *Mo Jharkaru Pruthibi* (The World from my Window, 1995) by Susmita Bagchi, novelist, who writes about America, including a very exciting visit to Grand Canyon; *Amerikare Kichhidina* (Some Days in America, 2003), an account of America with reflections on its places, people, culture and socio-economic policies by Basudev Sahu economist; *Duiti Jatra; Andaman O Sikim* (Two Journeys : Andaman and Sikim, 2003) by Sm. Sakuntala Panda, story-teller, a pleasant readable account

of two places in India, not frequently visited by people; and *Kanada-Bharat Parivramana : Kichhi Smruti Kichhi Anubuti* (A Tour of Canada and India : Memories and Experiences, 2000), an account of Canadian cities and places, where the writer, as an academician, spent a period of time on a Fellowship, almost first of its type in Oriya, by Laxmi Nrusingha Prasad Mohanty (b.1955). Sm. Prativa Roy, novelist, had six travelogues, detailing her visits to European countries as well as to U.K., U.S.A., and Australia. The books are written felicitously and are quite popular with the reading public.

New Flowering :Belles-Lettres, Feature, Journalistic Writing, and Children's Literature etc.

(i)

Belles-lettres, or 'elegant' writing, is largely a matter of style, and at different times different important Oriya essayists have used it as such. Thus before Independence we had such fine writers as Gopal Chandra Praharaj and Sashibhusan Roy who excelled as essayists, also incorporated elegant writing as a part of their style. Even after Independence we have seen particularly, Bhubaneswar Behera, Surendra Mohanty, Mahapatra Nilamoni Sahu and Chandrasekhar Rath doing the same. Probably Chandrasekhar Rath took it as a matter of faith, and in him it is not just a matter of style, but a matter of attitude too. In this connection we may further note a few good writers who would specify to this category. They are, Krushna Prasad Basu (1894-1968), Krushna Chandra Panigrahi, Sadasiv Mishra (1911-1994), Debi Prasanna Pattanaik, and Geneswar Mishra.

Basu's essays were first serialized in *Jhankar,* the monthly literary magazine from Cuttack, in the fifties, and were later published in book-form, entitled *Akhada Ghare Baithak* (The

Meetings in the Club House). The pieces were about the writer's own place, that is, Jajpur, and about his own involvement in local folk-operas. Krushna Chandra Panigrahi, a noted historian, wrote on topics related to history in an elegant style. His book *Prabandha Manasa* (Essays, A Mental Projection, 1972) collected a number of such topics. Thus this is how he refers to 'Raja Rani', the famous 13th century temple in Bhubaneswar - "The evening has come. The abode of Lingaraj now glistens like a spot on the west. Raja Rani ! No longer the sound of cymbals can be heard in your temple. No longer the jingling sound of bells in the ladies anklets fills the space, neither the vibrating dances of their silken dresses bring colour to you. The whole of Utkal is like you, without grace. Let me ask you today-, Raja Rani, you huffy, silent, stony, where have gone all your wealth, imagination and talent ?" Sadasiv Mishra, senior academician and vice-chancellar Utkal University, wrote very sparingly, but whenever he wrote, it was always in a conversational, dialogue-style and with an entertaining structure. His books include *Artha Arthantara* (Meaning and Meaning) and *Matru Mandap* (The Mother's Pavilion). Debi Prasanna Pattanaik, linguist, had two books *Kisa Puni Dekha Na Jaye* (What May not be Seen !, 1996) and *Laghu Katha* (Light Talk, 1998). Both the books collected a number of short essays on a variety of topics, written with an elegant personalized style, always with a personal point of view. This is how he writes on 'Walking' - "I have seen in my childhood days how mothers and grandmas while teaching a child how to walk used to say - 'Walk, walk, river sands.' Now I understand it was said keeping in view the unending walks of life. But this walk is not without an aim. If a man forgets the target of his walk he gets lost. It is like moving endlessly in a field, a walk not to reach anywhere ...Let all of us walk. We will look at flowers. We will taste fruits on the way. We will squeeze out honey. But it is necessary to fix up the aim before that." (*Laghu Katha,* p.21). Ganeswar Mishra had also a number of pieces collected in two

volumes *Lalu Babunka Kothi* (Lalu Babu's Quarters) and *Rukhi Pahadara Bagha* (The Tiger of the Rukhi Mountain, 1988), all written very elegantly, in a personal style. This is how he writes on grasshopper in his garden - "One day in the morning my six-year-old son Sipu collected something from the garden and showed me in great amazement. A strange creature of green colour - a grasshopper. Sipu of course has heard the story of the grasshopper many times, and if asked he can speak eloquently about it. But how could he know that the creature he has heard about and read about in books, really lives in our garden" (*Rukhi Pahadara Bagha,* P.57).

In contrast to belles-lettres, the type of writing popularly known as 'feature', is plentiful. Almost all Oriya newspapers everyday carry short articles on varieties of topics, related to social, socio-cultural, socio-economics or socio-political issues of the day, written in easily understood style and invariably with a point of view. These are popularly called 'feature' which deals with a problem, communicates information, and puts down the ways a problem is to be considered and assessed. There are a large number of writers, both senior and junior, who routinely write such pieces. We list a few relatively more important, whose writings are not only sharp and pointed and communicate a point of view quite for cefully, but invariably rise to the level of fine essays. They are, Satkadi Hota, Priyabrat Das, Rabi Sing, Bhupen Mahapata, Prafulla Kumar Mohanty (b.1939) and Debendra Mohanty, and their books are, respectively, *Samajika Bichara* (Social Considerations, 2002), *Kichhi Katha Kichhi Byatha* (Some Issues Some Pain, 2002), *Nirbachita Nibandha* (Selected Essays, 2002), *Jatiya Bhabadhara O Anyanya Prabandha* (Nationalistic Trends of Thought and other Essays, 2002), *Kichhi Akasha Kichhi Mati* (Some Sky Some Earth, 2002) and *Bharatar Bazar* (India's Market, 2002).

Thus, this is how Satkadi Hota writes of Mother India- "How a country is great, how glorious one can't say, only he feels about

it. Can a mother's greatness be explained in a few words, in a few poems. The mother and the motherland are greater than the heaven. He who has never sat on a mother's lap, never suckled the mother's milk, can never have the picture of mother in him. Likewise one feels the country's affection and glory, only when he treads on its holy soil, bathes in its streams, breathes its air, and views the beauty of its palmyards and jungles. This country is not just a geographical outline. Its hills, mountains, rivers, lakes, forests and fields, and towns and villages all combine not in a lifeless unit, but in the figure of a mother, living and alive." (*Samajika Bichara,* P.49). Priyabrat Das explores the causes for the movement for a separate province in western Orissa - "The responsibility for the western Orissa's mentality of separation lies equally with the people of the place as well as with the people in power of Orissa's administration and the people from the coast. The leaders in power at that time took a short-sighted view of not having any development in the areas that did not vote for them. Because the people of western Orissa and the people of ex-States' areas supported Ganatantra Parished and laterly Swatantra Party, in a traditional way, the development of that area was wilfully neglected. The spread of education in that area had been very indifferent even from the pre-Independence times. Therefore the educated people from the coastal areas went to fill up all Governmental posts in the newly-created districts after the State's merger. The way the Bengali clerks coming over to Orissa started looting it at the beginning of the British administration, likewise the Oriya employees from the coast started looting the area. Their mentality was like that of a victorious army in a defeated country." (*Kichhi Katha Kichhi Byatha.* P.76).

Similarly, Rabi Singh, poet and left-oriented thinker, speaks harshly of the origin of the 'national unity' of India - "However unpalatable it may appear, it is as true as the truth, that the big noise we the Indians make from the Himalayas to Kumarika, in the name of national unity, in reality, that was founded on the

points of bayonet of the British imperialism. They had united India by force to establish the so called 'national unity' because they wanted to give a strong, permanent. footing to their supremacy, administration, exploitation and loot. Even the great poet Rabindranath was so emotionally moved that he wrote appealing poetry in the name of 'Bharat Tirtha'... The birth-horoscope of the national unity of the British-made India was so framed that its utility ended on the 14th August midnight in 1947." (*Nirbachita Prabandha*). Bhupen Mahapatra, also a left-oriented thinker, speaks strongly of the waste in the name of 'national sentiment' - "Then what is this national sentiment ? What is its shape, colour, fragrance, so that the leaders sacrificed the country's hopes, desires, and the present and the future, and for seven days got engaged in an unsavoury quarrel inside the Parliament, and everybody wanted to appropriate that rare thing. And inaction of the Parliament for seven days wasted a good amount of the India's poor's millions of money. Whereas on the other hand, millions of people die without food, in poverty, in disease or in accidents, or by police bullet. Millions of people remain unemployed. The huge youth-power is in roads because of lack of education and employment. In spite of limitless expansion of science we are still under the grip of floods, drought and storm. Even after 50 years of Independence our country has only one identity in the world - India is a land of beggars." (*Bharatiya Bhavdhara O Anyanya Prabandh,* p.82).

Prafulla Kumar Mohanty speaks of the new 'gods' and 'goddesses' of the youth - "The new gods and goddesses of the popular culture are cinema stars and players. In the rooms of students in the hostels all over India we can see the photographs of cinema stars, cricket players and boxers. Instead of Saraswati-Laxmi, or Ram-Krushna, the youths revere such figures, as Sri Devi, Aisurya Roy, Tendulkar, P.T. Usa, Tyson, Michael Jackson and Daler Mahendi etc. There is nothing to be astonished. Because these gods and goddesses provide pleasure, joy and excitement to

millions of people all over the world, and in contrast to their talent or work, earn millions of rupees. Muhammad Ali's (Cassius Clay) one boxing is 10 lakh dollars, Michael Jackson's one evening 5 billion, Tendulkar's one sixer 10 lakh, and Madhuri Dixit or Rajnikant's one hour 1 crore. About a lakh of people purchase tickets to see Cricket or Football game directly, and crores and crores of people see that in T.V. in their homes. Much larger number of people gather round them, than they do round religious or political gods, or round any social hero. The number of publicists, defenders, distributors and commentators of these is immensely larger than any such people found for religious, political or otherwise gods and goddesses." (*Kichhi Akasha Kichhi Mati,* p.35). Debendra Mohanty who writes on economic conditions prevalent in India thus writes on work-culture in the context of open market - "The Government departments in India even now adopt the methods left over by the British. Whatever process, method or the rules the Britishers framed, the basic principle behind all that was that the Indians are frauds and untrustworthy. As it was not possible to get all people from abroad, they had appointed Indians in the lower rungs of Service. We are still clutching at the same process, methods and rules even after 50 years of Independence. To get maximum from the minimum labour, the lack of understanding, cooperation and relationship in work environment, the attitude of indifference and negligence towards the buyers, and cutting each other's throats and pulling each other's legs in the competition instead of cooperation, are the symptoms of a decadent work-culture. Unless this is changed it would not be possible to improve the service and production-oriented system. As the seeds of corruption and depravity are to be found in the upper layers of people's representatives and administrative employees, so also the seeds of cultural decay are in the upper layers of various organisations and institutions. Any attempt at change should begin from there." (*Bharatara Bajara,* p.9)

The journalistic writings, usually published as regular columns in the daily newspapers, are in content and motivation more earthy and localised, that is, they cater to immediately viable conditions and situation related to political, administrative, social and cultural factors, and offer comments and reflections on the appropriateness of the same. Thus one aspect of such writing is its ephemerality, but from another point of view, they provide documentation for the future generations to fall back upon, and also necessary analysis of socio-political-cultural conditions that surround the range of human living at any particular point of time. In this connection, we like to note the work of two journalists, one, a freelance writer, and the other, the editor of a daily newspaper. They are, Barendra Krushna Dhal who otherwise writes stories, and Saumyaranjan Pattanaik (b.1950). Dhal's book is *Mukta Bichara* (Open Deliberations), in multiple volumes, published at different times around the turn of the century, each a collection of such essays; and Pattanaik's, a collection of editorial-level articles that he wrote in his newspaper *Sambad,* entitled *Ama Gharara Halchal* (The Doings of our House, 1990).

Thus this is how Dhal's column written on 29.11.99, after the terrible storm (Super Cyclone) about the administration, a strong castigation grown out of agony - "After the terrible storm the administrative machinery of the province became completely inert. On the one hand, the inexperienced Chief Minister, and on the other, the non-cooperative bureaucracy, increased the people's plight manifold. Plunder and looting started recklessly all throughout the flood-storm-ravaged areas. Some started to portray the hungry, helpless people as looters. The administration became inert and immobile. The high officials did only review-meetings in the Secretariat. No body was interested to supervise relief operations in the devastated areas. At times only, to see the flood-

storm exhibition, they used to move out in the morning, return for lunch, sleep for two hours after lunch, and then sit in the review-meetings to have gossip and tea. Incredible administration - strange Government ! ...But who will do what ? If the Chief Minister orders who will obey him. The level to which the administration's moral character has fallen it is difficult to know who is doing what. Except few honest officers, all the rest have sunk in extreme depravation and corruption. Can a weak Chief Minister have the strength to organise and control the situation ? In fact the last 20 years administration in Orissa's history is most corrupted and depraved. The situation that has come up in Orissa now, and we have to beg like beggars and live on the pittance given with pity to us, the way this State's self-prestige and credibility have gone to dust, for that the last twenty years' corrupted, depraved and characterless political administrators, and the sycophantic bureaucracy are entirely responsible. (*Mukta Bichara,* Part V, P.68). In comparison to Dhal's, Pattanaik's pieces are shorter and tone conciliatory. Yet he puts forth his point of view with reason and firmness. Thus this is how he writes about the indifference of the Railway authorities towards Orissa, the occasion being the then Railway Minister's visit to Orissa, date 4.10.1988 - "Whenever we have raised objections in connection with the indifference of the Railway authorities, the officers of the concerned Departments have always tried to show statistics and cost-effectiveness supporting them, and have maintained that our objections have no merit. So long these oppositional attitudes are there what would be the Railway Minister's responsibility to Orissa ? On the one hand the bureaucracy's file-accounts and dry statistics, on the other, the weight of a State's sentiments and self-respect. We consider it is Mr. Sindhia's moral responsibility to judge these problems from the point of view of political far-sightedness as also from Orissa's national interest. From economic point of view, as well as for the

development of Paradeep port, as also the availability of railway transport to Orissa's mineral-areas, probably it would be unnecessary to point out the important role of railway-transport in Orissa. Another important matter is to achieve mental unity in Orissa, which needs good communication link as among south, western and north parts of Orissa. For all that only the railways can provide the most valuable help. Since people have already been convinced that in this matter Orissa is not given its due share of consideration, the attempts to wipe that out by showing the cost-benefit statistics will never be successful. We do not know if the officials have shown their calculations to Sindhia, but if he takes that as conclusive giving no weightage to people's sentiment and interest, then the results are bound to be harmful." (*Ama Gharara halchal,* P.98). Belles-lettres, features and journalistic writings are linked with each other in motivation, that is, to move people's sentiments and set them to think, and to that extent they, particularly the latter two, have developed and established an important dimension of modern Oriya literature.

At the end, we like to refer to the growth of children's literature in Orissa in the post-Independence years. First of all it is a thin body of literature, yet it has good potientiality of growth, and given the interest of the people in general, and of the writers involved, it is expected to grow larger dimensions in future. We can note a select list of writers for our record, who are otherwise established in other areas, and have taken this up as their second hobby. Among the senior writers are, Upendra Tripathy (1903-1994), probably only person solely devoted to children's literature Udaynath Sarangi, Bira Kishor Das, Kunja Bihari Dash, Anant Pattanaik, Sm. Bidyut Prava, Chittaranjan Das, Gokulananda Mahapatra (b.1923, who writes on science topices) and Durga Prasad Pattanaik (1918-?, who is otherwise an eminent artist). Among other writers are, Nandakishor Samal, Ramprasad

Mohanty, Maheswar Mohanty, Nadiya Bihari Mohanty, Khirod Chandra Pothal, Nanda Kishor Singh, Kulamani Samal, Jagannath Mohanty, Ramesh Chandra Parida, Das Benhur and Manoj Das. A large number of journals devoted to children's literature are also being published, and some daily newspapers, such as *Sambad* publish a weekly supplement that often accommodates writings by children themselves. On the whole, it is a growing area, that goes to touch not only the imagination of children, but also the imagination of the adult, and its growth needs watching seriously.

On the whole the Independence opened up innumerable horizons for Oriya writers, as it did the same elsewhere in India, and the weight of this period, when considered in its totality, is much heavier in comparison to all that has preceded it. Post-Independence. Oriya literature came to acquire (as also post-Independence Indian literature as a whole) an identity and personality that changed its motivation, attitude and range, and linked it to a world-body of sensibility and sensitiveness, in consonant with thc deliberations in a fast changing environment and time. If literature provides becoming factors to an incomprehensible, uncomprehending, complex existence, the post-Independence Oriya literature has tried to do that, and has established its utility in no small measure, towards viability and relevance.



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